

STEEDEMAN

AND

HIS MEN

AT

CHICKAMAUGA :



—BY—

J. T. WOODS, M. D.



TOLEDO:

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TO THE

HON. M. R. WAITE,

CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES,

WHOSE DISTINCTION IS EQUALED BY HIS MERITS,

This Sketch

IS

(WITH PERMISSION)

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY HIS FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

This unpretentious volume is nothing more than a contribution to the history of a great battle. The authority from which it has been prepared is given in an accompanying letter from the distinguished actor who has furnished its data, the writer assuming nothing save the manner of their presentation.

It is not hoped that either criticism or censure will be avoided, but deeming that justice demands that history should not only be truth, but the whole truth, these pages have been prepared without fear or favor, the author seeking to do strict justice to both the deserving and the recreant.

In presenting the part taken by a single division of troops, such general reference to the battle as a whole as would render their action more readily understood, has necessarily been made; and that the non-military reader may as nearly as possible comprehend the account, care has been observed in regard to minor incidents, and in giving, whenever possible, the exact language used in conversation and orders.

The meed of praise is due to all alike who "fought the good fight" to the end, and fame will ever cherish

the names of those engaged in the conflict, but whose heroism is not especially dwelt upon in these pages. The design of this volume limits its account to the part taken by Steedman's command, but without thought of ignoring the heroic courage of all who grappled with the country's foes on that bloody field. To other hands is left the task of making up the record of the many others, living and dead, who are entitled to enrollment on the scroll of fame, and of preparing an account, truthful and complete, of this great tragic battle.

THE AUTHOR

TOLEDO, OHIO, *August 3d, 1870.*

DR. J. T. WOODS:

Dear Sir,—I have read the manuscript of your little volume entitled "STEEDMAN AND HIS MEN AT CHICKAMAUGA," and I beg leave to say to you, that so far as I remember the occurrences of the engagement, it is a full and truthful account of the part taken by my command in that fierce and terrible battle, and is the only statement I have ever seen which does justice to the brave men who saved the command of GENERAL GEORGE H. THOMAS from defeat and probable capture.

Very Respectfully

Your Friend,

JAMES B. STEEDMAN.

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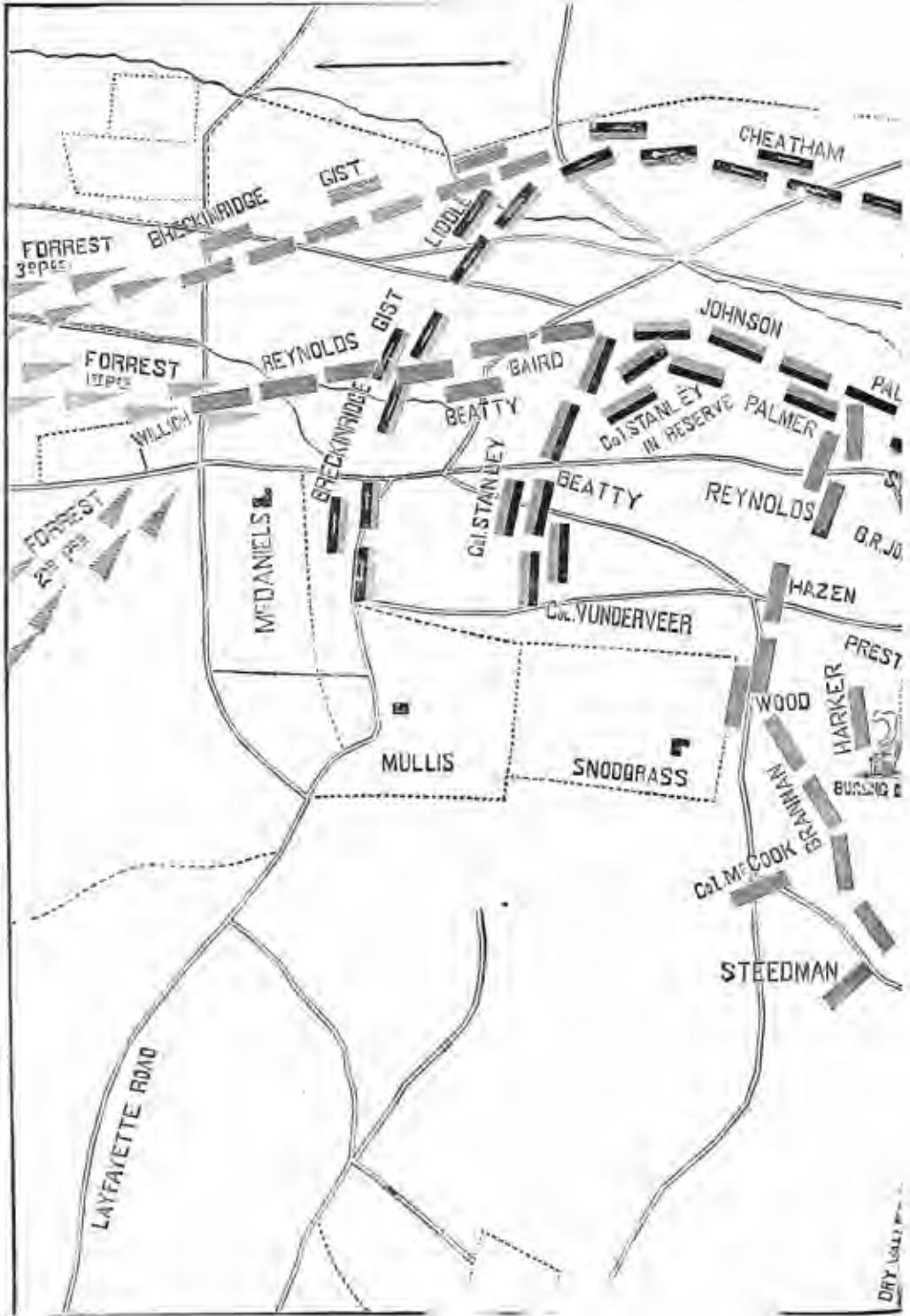
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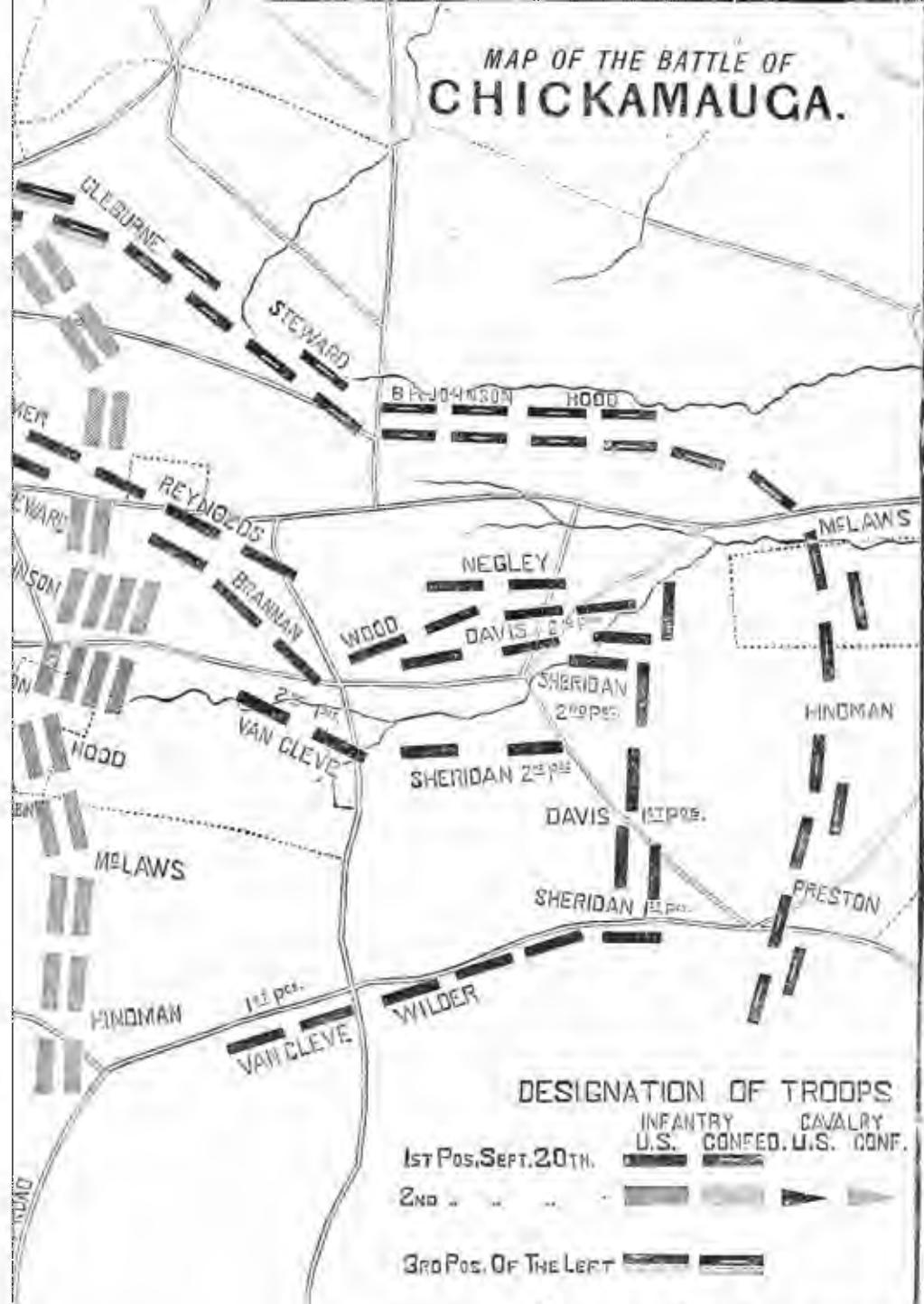
DESIGNATION OF TROOPS

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U.S. CONFED.pos. SEP 18thMAP OF THE BATTLE OF
CHICKAMAUGA.

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MAP OF THE BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA.



EXPLANATORY

The accompanying maps have been accurately copied from those officially prepared by the War Department, and published for Government use by authority of Edward Stanton, Secretary of War. In regard to the position of the troops under command of General Steedman, some minor inaccuracies existed in the original, which, in these copies, have been corrected under his personal supervision, thus making them more nearly accurate than any heretofore published. a fact that greatly enhances their value.

The first map embraces the entire field, from our extreme right near Crawfish Springs to Rossville Pass on the left, showing the positions as they occurred on the day previous to and the day of the opening of battle on September 19, 1863.

The varying changes of the contestants cannot fail to interest even the general reader, and that they may to some extent follow

them, both lines are marked in two positions, selected for their especial bearing on the progress of the fight. They are so distinguished that by observing the key on each map, they may be readily traced, from the beginning to the end of the contest.

The United States forces engaged, comprised what is known as the "Army of the Cumberland," commanded by Major General Rosecrans, while the rebels were led by General Braxton Bragg. The organization of the troops engaged in this sanguinary contest, is made definite in the following tables :

FEDERAL.

COMMANDING ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND—MAJ. GEN. W. S. ROSECRANS.

COM- MANDS.	Commanding Corps.	COMMANDING DIVISIONS.			
		Comd'g 1st Div.	Comd'g 2d Div.	Comd'g 3d Div.	Comd'g 4th Div.
14TH A. C.	Major General Geo. H. Thomas.	Brig.-Gen. A. Baird.	Maj.-Gen. J. S. Negley.	Brig.-Gen. J. M. Brannan.	Maj.-Gen. J. J. Reynolds.
20TH A. C.	Maj.-Gen. A. McD. McCook.	Brig.-Gen. J. C. Davis.	Brig.-Gen. R. W. Johnson.	Maj.-Gen. P. H. Sheridan	
21ST A. C.	Maj.-Gen. T. J. Crittenden.	Brig.-Gen. T. J. Wood.	Maj.-Gen. J. M. Palmer.	Brig.-Gen. H. P. VanCleve.	
RESERVE CORPS.		Brig.-Gen. J. B. Steedman.			
CAVALRY CORPS.	Brig.-Gen. R. Mitchell.	Colonel E. M. McCook.			

CONFEDERATE.

COMMANDING CONFEDERATE ARMY—GEN. BRAXTON BRAGG.

COMMANDS.	Commanding Corps.	COMMANDING DIVISIONS.		
LONGSTREET'S CORPS.	Lieut.-Gen. J. Longstreet.	Maj.-Gen. J. B. Hood.	Brig.-Gen. McLaw.	Brig.-Gen. B. R. Johnson.
POLK'S CORPS.	Lieut.-Gen. L. Polk.	Maj.-Gen. B. F. Cheatham.	Maj.-Gen. F. C. Hindman.	
HILL'S CORPS.	Lieut.-Gen. D. H. Hill.	Maj.-Gen. P. R. Cleburne.	Maj.-Gen. J. C. Breckinridge.	
BUCKNER'S CORPS	Maj.-Gen. S. B. Buckner.	Maj.-Gen. A. P. Stuart.	Brig.-Gen. W. Preston.	
WALKER'S CORPS.	Maj.-Gen. W. H. T. Walker.	Brig.-Gen. J. R. Liddell.	Brig.-Gen. S. R. Gist.	
WHEELER'S CAVALRY CORPS.	Maj.-Gen. J. Wheeler.	Brig.-Gen. J. A. Wharton.	Brig.-Gen. W. Martin.	
FORREST'S CAVALRY CORPS.	Brig.-Gen. N. B. Forrest.	Brig.-Gen. F. Armstrong.	Brig.-Gen. J. Pegram.	

It has been deemed advisable to omit the hills and forests, for the purpose of making the positions of troops more distinct, but it must be remembered that the country was exceedingly rugged, and that in consequence few roads were practical for the movement of an army, a fact of vital importance, as the subsequent account will show.

The second of these maps embraces only

that part of the field occupied by the contestants on the second day, Sept. 20, 1863. For the sake of definiteness, it is of very much larger scale, but its exact relation to the preceding, and the position of the troops as compared with the first day, may be readily determined by noting on both, the *Dry Valley* and *Lafayette Roads*, and the farms of MULLIS, McDANIEL and SNODGRASS, as a guide.

The reader will observe that on this map three positions are marked, the third representing the extreme left of the Federal and right of the Confederate line at the point to which the former at one time advanced, after which they were compelled to fall back to their former position, the confederates correspondingly advancing.

The writer entertains the hope that even those who were not there, may, by a little attention, obtain satisfactory information in regard to this act in our great national tragedy.



Part First.

CHICKAMAUGA:

ON THE LEFT.

PRELIMINARIES.

CHATTANOOGA was invaluable as a strategic point in the autumn of 1863. Being the key to important positions, he who held it securely must be complete master of the situation. Occupied by General Bragg, his veterans drew from its tributary valleys immense supplies of material support for the Confederate cause.

His men held adjacent mountain and hill, with stern purpose guarding every pass. The

Tennessee river and the railroads that radiate southward from this point into the Confederacy opened to him a vast extent of country, enabling him also to maintain communication with his rear. His only vulnerable point was therefore south of his position, and guarded chiefly by citizens unswervingly loyal to him. A handful of Confederate soldiers at selected localities along his northern front were each proof against as many hosts. But the attaining of his rear by his enemy would wrest from him the railroads to the south, and with them his only means of securing supplies. There could in that case remain no alternative but to abandon the position, making an attempt to move a vast army by circuitous routes amid mountain defiles, and in their face to try the desperate venture of forcing a march through gorges rent in the mountain chain. Of necessity the points selected for such a purpose must be some distance from Chattanooga, where they could be only lightly guarded if at all occupied by rebel troops, and consequently liable at any time to fall into the hands of his foes.

General Bragg well knew that a superior force, resolutely led, could succeed in attaining a position that would leave him no reliable avenue of escape, and none for reinforcement from his friends. With deep concern he must have watched the National Army under Gen. Rosecrans as it advanced from the North, crossed the Tennessee and venturing the dubious passes of the Lookout range, were straining every nerve to attain the position so fatal to his command. To prevent this he knew his force to be insufficient, leaving no alternative but to fall back immediately and wait for the arrival of expected additional troops from the army of Virginia before engaging in battle. With what regret he abandoned Chattanooga, the attempt to retake which must be made at the bloody expense of a terrible battle, may easily be imagined. It was begun, however, with commendable promptness, the Confederate army passing rapidly through Rossville and Ringgold, the latter being the point at which Longstreet was expected, and where he might at any hour arrive.

The National troops, divided far by the rugged passes through which they had marched, endeavored to follow the fugitives and at the same time bring their columns together in the rear of the retreating rebels, so as to keep secure in their hands the captured stronghold. But after having passed the dread defiles they remained in detached columns, unable, from the extremely broken character of the country, to rapidly close up or aid each other in case of emergency, and were thus in imminent peril. This fact was fully comprehended by the wary Bragg, who, as soon as he learned of the rapid approach and early arrival of his expected reinforcements, determined to take advantage of it, and moving south to his right, selecting the hamlet of Lafayette on the east side of Pigeon Mountains as a favorable point for concentration, faced about and commenced to maneuver for attack on General Rosecrans before the complete concentration of his troops could be effected.

This prompted the latter officer to cause his left, that in pursuit had been advanced beyond Ringgold, to fall back in precipitate haste to the

west side of the Chickamauga, and to march southward up the stream, the extreme right, still far away under Maj.-Gen. Alex. McCook, being urged to move rapidly to such point as would enable him, when the two wings were combined with his center, to hold the roads to Chattanooga against the evident purpose of the rebel leader to gain them.

General Bragg having concentrated at Lafayette, a movement through the passes of Pigeon Mountain range would bring the rebel army to the east side of the Chickamauga, and face to face with his foe, with only that narrow, tortuous and treacherous stream intervening. In effecting this design he would force to battle the Union army in detachments, crushing them in detail, they being far from their base of supplies, with everywhere rugged and tortuous roads, and at their back Lookout Mountain range and Mission Ridge, in which accessible passes were few and none at all practicable for the movement of a large army save that known as McFarland's Gap, through which lay the Dry Valley road, and that of Rossville, both of which are

deep ragged gorges in rugged Mission Ridge. The highway through McFarland's Gap was from its position especially important to both contestants, that through Rossville Gap, although some distance away to the north, might become equally so.

The road leading eastward from Chattanooga through the latter to Ringgold would probably in the beginning be near the extreme Federal left or northerly part of the field, and might before its conclusion be the center of the expected contest. The prospective importance of this highway was also heightened by the fact that it crosses Chickamauga Creek by means of Ringgold Bridge, a substantial structure, being one of a few and probably the best means of crossing that narrow but deep and treacherous stream. Its occupancy must be of vital importance, as a small force could hold it against vastly superior numbers. Whichever of the contestants made the attack must encounter this difficulty.

An intervening stream that can be crossed only by means of unreliable fords and bridges is a matter of great importance to an attacking

army, when the opposite shore is held by vigilant troops, a fact of which both contestants were fully aware, and of which both strove to avail themselves. To seize and hold this point of vantage Gen. Rosecrans decided to avail himself of the services of a part of the Reserve Corps, commanded by Major-Gen. Gordon Granger, which was doing duty at various points in Tennessee. The First Division of this Corps, commanded by Brig.-Gen. James B. Steedman, received orders from that officer to move to the front on September 9th, 1863, and hastily concentrating two brigades, on the 13th, arrived at Rossville Pass, having been joined at Bridgeport by Major-General Granger and staff. They had arrived at the front and found the military sky far from serene. One of the Brigades of Steedman's Division having been detained on other duty, General Granger, on the 14th, directed Colonel Dan. McCook with his Brigade to report to him, thus giving the Division in the field its complement of men, that it might have greater efficiency in any emergency. Every hour seemed pregnant with important

events, among which was to them the possible arrival of reinforcements to General Bragg.

On Wednesday, the 16th, the commander of the division was surprised by receiving an order *direct from General Rosecrans*, to make with one brigade a reconnaissance *toward* Ringgold, the nearest railroad point in possession of the enemy, and that at which the expected troops would arrive, the evident purpose of the ordered reconnaissance being to discover facts on this and possibly other important matters.

Why the commander of the Reserve Corps should have left two divisions in the rear and without positive orders to do so, joined a single one on its way to the front, is now perhaps unexplainable, save upon the hypothesis that he desired to be at the post of danger and glory; but the reception of orders by the Division Commander *direct* from the Commander of the Army certainly presents the extraordinary circumstance of the ignoring of a Corps Commander and his presence without a command, he being compelled to be an idle looker-on at the movements of his own troops. With this

the Division Commander had nothing whatever to do. The order detached him from his corps, and made him responsible only to the source from which it came. Its execution admitted of no delay, as the reconnoisance was plainly a matter of importance.

Selecting from his brigades five regiments of tried mettle, consisting of about twenty-five hundred men, together with one battery of artillery, the General took personal command, and proceeded at once. Owing to the great heat and absence of water the march was toilsome in the extreme, but pushed with such willing vigor that near evening the head of the column arrived at the little stream that meanders about three-fourths of a mile to the west of the village of Ringgold.

Both weariness and prudence dictated a halt at this point while a reconnoitering party passed over the stream to look down from its bluffy bank on the demure town which they were surprised to find filled with hordes of freshly arrived rebel soldiers. Occupied with many duties, they were in blissful ignorance of the presence of the daring

observers until two pieces of artillery that had been ordered to the bluff sent them a few rounds of Yankee compliments. This presumption could not be long continued in the face of such a foe, and retreating under the cover of the other guns that opened from the opposite side of the stream, the return march began in the dusk of the evening, with the enemy closely pressing.

The determination shown in the advance was then equaled by an earnestness to escape those they had sought and found. Men made the forced march cheerfully, and halted with equal willingness to build camp fires as if they had gone into camp in order to delay the enemy, who would approach cautiously until the cheat was discovered. By every possible device time was gained for the retreating column, it once being so closely pressed that a company was detailed and secreted by the way side, who discomfited and delayed the advancing rebels by pouring into them from out the solemn darkness a rattling volley. By dint of hard marching and successful strategy, the little command reached

Pea Vine Creek about one o'clock in the morning, and were within eleven miles of the camp from which they had started.

Intense exhaustion and proximity of reinforcements being sufficient warrant, the command went into bivouac in a position selected with a view to its defense. Moving at day-break, they passed over a sharp ridge in the grey of the morning.

Being confident of the approach of the enemy, the Commanding General, with Adj't-Gen. Moe, trusting to the fleetness of their horses in case of emergency, halted on the summit while the troops moved on. They were soon rewarded by the appearance of the head of the rebel column, that, moving rapidly and with stately magnificence, filed to the south toward Lafayette by the road along the eastern bank of Peavine Creek. They little knew they were passing in review before such interested observers, who, from the facts noted, estimated them at not less than twenty thousand muskets. No unnecessary time was lost either in this halt or in overtaking the troops, all arriving at camp about 11 o'clock

in the morning. The reconnoisance was thus completed, and the important facts ascertained at once communicated to the Commanding General of the Department.

Scarce an hour had passed since his arrival when Gen. Steedman was astonished to receive a second order *direct* from Gen. Rosecrans, and by a strange coincidence Gen. Granger was again present. These were written directions to move at once with his command to Red House or Ringgold Bridge, over which he had just passed on his return, with emphasized instructions to "hold it at all hazards," in order to cover this important approach to Chattanooga. The unrested command immediately retraced its steps, Gen. Granger remaining with his staff and escort solitary and idle military residents of Rossville.

Proceeding due east on the pike, Division Headquarters were established at McAfee Church, about three-fourths of a mile to the west of Chickamauga and its Ringgold Bridge. The stream being unfordable at that or any adjacent point, and the bridge of about

eighty feet span, three regiments of infantry, a battery of four guns, and a squadron of Minty's cavalry, all under command of Brig.-Gen. Walter Whittaker, was deemed sufficient for its defense, with the remainder of the division in easy supporting distance.

This position was a considerable distance from the headquarters of Gen. Rosecrans, and his appreciation of details might not be as complete as to those who on the spot studied all the points in the situation. The specific order to hold Ringgold Bridge was to be obeyed, but the military purpose contemplated the necessity of offering every possible obstruction to the rebels in crossing this stream, and thus, by retarding their movements, at least gain time for the more complete concentration of the Union army.

General Steedman accordingly assumed the responsibility of obeying his orders in the spirit of their philosophy rather than the exact text. In lieu of holding all of his reserves near his headquarters for the purpose of support in case of an attack on Ringgold Bridge, Gen. McCook, with his brigade and a

four-gun battery was directed to proceed to Reed's Bridge, a substantial crossing about three miles up the stream, with orders to hold it as long as practicable, without bringing on an engagement, and in case of attack to destroy it before retiring. Having thus made the proper disposition for holding two important bridges, the General rested, with Mitchell's Brigade, two regiments of Whittaker's, and a four-gun battery, at McAfee Church, ready to respond to a summons for assistance from either of his outposts.

In the vicinity of Lee & Gordon's Mill, by the Lafayette road about three miles to the south, General Rosecrans was still compelled to impatiently await the arrival of Maj.-Gen. Alex. McCook's command—the corps that had made its advance far to his right through Alpine Pass, and with the chronic misfortune of that officer had become "lost" in the defiles, thus greatly delaying his arrival on the scene of action. During this time Gen. Bragg was busied in marching down the stream northward for the treble purpose of closing up on his reinforcements arriving from Ring-

gold, getting nearer to the desired roads and passes through Mission Ridge, and gaining access to the bridges and fords that were so far from the main force of Rosecrans that they must be insufficiently guarded.

With keen apprehension Steedman waited all the forenoon of the 18th without a word of instruction or tidings. Each passing hour deepened his anxiety, when about three o'clock in the afternoon the startling news was picked up from some fugitive negroes that the rebels had crossed the Chickamauga at Fowler's Ford, about one mile above Reed's Bridge, when he at once inferred that they would march down the west side of the creek, in the rear of Colonel Dan. McCook's position, and cut him off effectually. It was thus evident that this outpost was in imminent peril, from which nothing but prompt action could extricate it, its safety being all the more important from the fact that its exposure had been made on the responsibility of the Division Commander alone. Steedman fully appreciated the fact that success secures plaudits, while, if failure

follows, the act is deemed a criminal blunder worthy only of disgrace.

In order to guard against such a misfortune Col. Mitchell, with his brigade, was immediately directed to move to a point within one-half mile of McCook; and an order sent the latter officer to at once burn the bridge and fall back on Mitchell's new position.

This new disposition of his command was not at all in accordance with the fancy of McCook, who seemed to have a desire to get into the grooves of glory. No effort was made to conceal his disappointment and disapprobation, as he remarked that he should of course obey, "but General Steedman does not appreciate the situation."

The facts were that he, with a reserve, was a few hundred yards in rear and on the west side, with a detachment doing guard duty at the bridge. The head of the rebel column had appeared near them unobserved by McCook, and while he was venting his disappointment, his advance guard, comprehending the danger, fell back, by a circuitous march reaching the reserve. The urgency

was so great that the bridge could not be fired without bringing on an engagement, and thus fell into the hands of the enemy a valuable facility for their future movements. Col. Minty, with a detachment of cavalry, had occupied a position on the east side of the stream, and made his escape by riding around the head of a rebel column, reporting at McAfee Church during the afternoon.

Strangely enough, in this situation, the main lines of both friend and foe halted through long weary hours. About midnight of the 18th, information reached Division Headquarters, through an ambulance load of wounded soldiers, that "a very large rebel detachment had been moving in the direction of the position of Colonels McCook and Mitchell, both during the afternoon and early part of the night." An order was in consequence dispatched to Col. McCook to fall back to McAfee Church with both brigades, the messenger reaching him on the 19th, just as the dawn revealed a brigade of rebel infantry on the west side, emerging from the

woods between and to the right of his position and the Chickamauga. McCook, surveying it with delight, had marked it as lost to the Confederate cause just as the order to retire reached him.

His chagrin at the receipt of his former order to fall back, was immeasurably intensified by a similar one with an enemy in his immediate front, apparently sent by chance to be gathered in by his prowess. Nothing but intense mortification could have prompted him to remark to Col. J. T. Croxton, of Brannon's Division, that had just taken position on his right, "that, he had supposed, when he received his temporary assignment to the command of General Steedman, he had been placed under a fighting officer who would afford him a chance to win distinction; but he had, instead, proved to be his evil genius, and had just plucked from his shoulder a star, for had it not been for the inopportune receipt of this detested order he would have moved on and whipped the indiscreet rebel command, and thus deserved promotion."

Colonel Croxton, whose brigade formed Brannon's left, being infected by the enthusiasm of Colonel McCook's remarks, without the knowledge of his commander, directed Captain Moore, of the 14th Ohio, to advance his skirmishers and find the enemy—at the same time moving the brigade forward to his support—as if in search of the regretted "lost star," thus bringing on the first day's engagement of the historic battle.

It proved to be a rash, "starless" venture, for, in a few moments, he was in the toils of a powerful enemy, necessitating the sending to his support Brannon's two remaining brigades, who held their ground, but were most severely punished. McCook, stifling his mortification as best he could, was proceeding on his way to McAfee Church, while Croxton demonstrated that the point he had selected was really an unpromising one to look for glory with a single brigade, as the entire division encountered more than four to one.

Gen. Rosecrans was much embarrassed by the necessity of waiting for Maj.-Gen. McCook and his corps to join him on his right. Not

daring to face so powerful an enemy with a divided command, he could not move down the stream to defend the crossings, and thus check the advance of the enemy, as the gap between him and McCook would thus be dangerously widened, an advantage they were wisely using by pushing forward their right toward every available bridge and ford below.

In maneuvering for position the enemy displayed an extended front, exhibiting everywhere the utmost caution, determination and courage. Every possible point of advantage was fiercely tested by them with varying results. They greatly desired to secure every possible facility for crossing the Chickamauga. Accordingly, at about two o'clock in the afternoon, a large force of dismounted rebel cavalry attacked General Whittaker, at Ringgold Bridge, but were repulsed after a sharp encounter in which the Federal loss was two killed and twelve wounded. Thus hour by hour intensified the preliminary mutterings of the coming storm.

Occasional gusts of distant battle trembling through the air do not soothe earnest patriots

and ambitious souls. To lie inactive at McAfee Church with a division of infantry, three four-gun batteries and two squadrons of cavalry, with his only information brought in the sound of distant cannon, suited neither the commander nor the men. Accordingly, at four in the afternoon, Colonel Minty was ordered to make a reconnoisance to the south-east, in the direction of Ringgold. Advancing promptly, this officer reached Graysville, about seven miles distant, and, returning about eight o'clock in the evening, reported that he found nothing but a squad of cavalry in that village, and that they fled on his approach. These facts could only be interpreted to mean that the enemy had concentrated his forces with a view of making a desperate attack on the main army, probably the left and centre, commanded by General Thomas, whose troops covered the Dry Valley road. The Ringgold road being thus evidently abandoned in their plans, the guarding of Ringgold bridge could be a matter of no consequence, beside which the enemy had possession of others sufficient for their pur-

poses, and were already in force on the west side, having given battle there during the early part of the day.

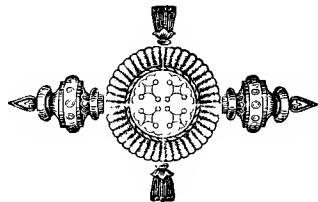
With this view of the situation, General Steedman, on the return of Colonel Minty, addressed a note to General Rosecrans, expressing the opinion that "the enemy would attack General Thomas with great fury in the morning, and requesting permission to join him during the night with his division." To insure the receipt of this communication, copies were intrusted to two orderlies, whose instructions were the same. Their efforts were fruitless, as about four o'clock on the morning of the 20th one of the orderlies returned with the information that he had been unable to find General Rosecrans, and the fate of the other is unknown, but it is probable that in the effort to discharge his duty he lost his life.

The midday arrival of General McCook, on the right, had given General Rosecrans the long and anxiously-waited-for facility for movement, but not until after most important advantages had been gained by his powerful

and wary foe. To counteract the effort of Bragg to throw his right forward, and advancing, gain possession of the roads and passes, the Union line was strengthened at that point by moving troops from the right to the left of the front thus exposed, closing any gaps formed by every means possible to give strength, or such deceptive appearance as would serve the purpose. In this way and for these imperative reasons the battle-field was slowly shifted down the stream toward Steedman and his men. The continued moving of troops, from his right to his left, in the face of the enemy, often under their fire, was a task of difficulty and danger, for the omnipresent rebels contested every inch, and endeavored to foil every change that could, by any possibility, bring their disadvantage. In fact this had been the philosophy of the day's maneuvering, with desperate encounters at various points.

Saturday, Sept. 19, 1863, had been along the right and centre a day of battle with varying losses and gain. On the extreme left it had been one of anxiety and uncer-

tainty. On the morrow the storm must burst with untold fury, for which the preliminaries having been fully perfected, the labor of the day ended.



Part Second.

MOVEMENT.

NIGHT had brought no relief for the anxiety of the preceding day. During the long hours weary men marched to new positions, only too glad, at any opportunity, to snatch brief intervals of rest and sleep. The watchful pickets abated nothing in the vindictive spite of their fierce salutes to each other, for each knew that duty hugged close around each and every one.

Information of transpiring events had reached McAfee Church only through a few wounded men and the rumble of war, its boom of guns, its gusts of rifle volleys, drowned by distance and intervening forest-clad hills into a mammoth whisper.

In solemn, earnest silence the combatant lines fronted each other in the morning's

dawn. It was Sunday, with little thought of thankfulness or prayer, as every soul was fully absorbed in fearful expectancy. The rising sun dispelled the least shadow of doubt, for with it occurred a fierce and determined attack on the left and center of the Union battle line, precisely as anticipated in the note of General Steedman to the commanding general.

In their endeavor each to overlap the other, slowly the scene of action moved northward still. Nearer and nearer had they approached until the sound of the terrific and repeated onslaughts had become painfully audible to the division that was idling away its time and wasting its strength, while their comrades battled against odds with doubtful issue. The order to hold the bridge at all hazards, received direct from the commanding general, stood plainly in the way of duty, and could be regarded only in the light of inexorable military law—"to ask no questions, obey orders, and accept the consequences." To disobey was to trifle with fate, to peril all, and failing to make good

the purpose in so doing would insure condemnation and disgrace.

The issues at stake, both personal and general, were therefore momentous, but after mature thought and deliberation the bold resolution was taken by General Steedman to disobey his orders, abandon his position and proceed to the field with his entire force.

It was near eleven o'clock on the morning of Sunday, and the commanders of brigades, together with many field officers, were convened, by order, in McAfee Church; privates joining to swell the numbers. Never had a more solemn, earnest and enthusiastic gathering occurred beneath that humble roof. To them their commander read his orders from Rosecrans, after which he stated his information and conjectures as to the condition of their comrades who were then engaged with the enemy. Judging from the changing situation from which the sounds of battle arose, it seemed clear to his mind that the Union forces were receiving severe punishment, and the issue a matter of grave apprehension. The duty to which they had

been assigned might once have been of vital importance, but at that hour there was no enemy before them. His whole force was concentrated at the point of attack, while this division remained idle listeners, rendering no real assistance in the hour of evident need. The property they were guarding did not belong to anyone present, none of them had any interest in adjacent real estate; none present paid any taxes in that locality, beside which the bridge would be as valueless for passage by rebels if it were in ashes as if guarded by Federal guns. He naively assured his officers that they had not been called together in "council of war," but simply that he might explain his reasons and announce to them his determination to "burn the bridge and march at once, with his whole force, to the field of battle." It was a bold and defiant act, involving disobedience of orders. That responsibility he assumed, together with its consequences, and to the measure he "not only expected their acquiescence, but their cordial and earnest concurrence." To the announcement that they were immediately to move

from safety into danger, it is but just to say that his auditors signified their approval by the most enthusiastic expressions, and with evident delight obeyed the final instructions to "proceed at once to their respective posts of duty and prepare to move at a moment's notice."

Never was bold resolution more wisely taken ; never was disobedience more tempered with wisdom, for a terrible drama was speedily drawing to a close with certain disaster to the Union forces. The gallant rebels of the west vied with the eastern veterans of Longstreet in soldierly bearing and magnificent feats of arms. Every hill, every valley, every thicket, every wood and plain, was already dense with smoke, hot with passion, and reeking with carnage.

Almost ceaselessly, for many hours, from right to left, from left to right, had flowed and rolled the fierce shout of defiance and the strange thrilling wave of musketry. Shattered, as if by the lightnings of Jupiter, crushed, as if 'neath the blows of Vulcan, the corps of Major-Generals McCook and Crittenden

were in fragments, their commanders abandoning the dangerous field for the more peaceful hamlets of Chattanooga. Many of the subordinate officers in these commands, and thousands of their brave men, too gallant to follow their chiefs, remained, and, forming into detachments, under whoever offered to lead them, plunged again into the fight with the indomitable Thomas, who, as his thinning battalions closed around him, seemed determined to defy the fierce strength of all the hosts of Mars. On both their flanks the Union rear of the morning had become the rear of the rebel line. Hosts of fugitives, with artillery, limbers, caissons, wagons, ambulances, hospitals, all the possible *debris* of a shattered army and a battle lost, were from everywhere pouring into every available path or highway, and, forming into ghastly processions, sought to go anywhere out of that maelstrom of horrors.

What remained of the corps of General Thomas, with the proud spirited remnants of the two routed corps, continued to close up as their numbers lessened; keeping their faces

to the foe that, in crushing numbers, beat against their front, and slowly, but surely, were overlapping their flanks.

The shattered line, pressed from point to point by pure force of powder and ball, at last occupied a low range of broken hills. There it stood, resembling in shape a huge horseshoe, the extremities of which were not a thousand yards apart—that on the south being somewhat the longer of the two. The center looked eastward into the grim, cheerful faces of the enemy, who, with consummate boldness and skill, availed themselves of every point that could be won by art or valor.

Near the centre of this semicircle of human slaughter, on an open spot, mid a clump of old dead trees, at the south-east corner of Snodgrass farm, stood, unmoved, unfaltering, the ruling spirit of the storm—

“The noblest Roman of them all!”

The belief that had led to the destruction of Ringgold bridge was certainly well founded, and not a moment too soon was Steedman’s column in motion, although it was but mid-

day when it moved from camp into the open grounds in a direct line toward the field. The advance had just passed McAfee Church when General Granger unexpectedly rode up with his staff, having just arrived from Rossville. Saluting his division commander, he promptly inquired, with a fearful decoration of adjectives, what he was doing. No reply could be more courteous than "General Granger, I am going over to the fight that General Thomas is having with the rebels." No urbanity of manner or speech could make the announcement less than astounding to Granger, who, utterly amazed, replied with deep earnestness, "General, you have been ordered in writing, by General Rosecrans, to hold Ringgold bridge 'at all hazards,' and it is a fearful thing for an officer to disobey an order of the commanding general in the face of the enemy."

To this concise statement of a startling fact, General Steedman, with his purpose unalterably fixed, could only reply, "True, Gen. Granger, but the situation is much changed since the issuing of that order, and if the commanding general were here, or knew the

facts, he would certainly change it and order me to the field. Thomas is fighting against large odds, if he can hold his position without us he can win a victory with us. There is no enemy in our front, we are doing no good here, and are much needed on the field."

To this argument Granger could only courteously reply, "I know you are right," with the instinct of a regular officer adding, "but, being with you, I will be censured."

Amid the multiplicity of more important matters such a thought had not occurred to General Steedman, who promptly answered, "No, General Granger, you shall not be censured. This is *my* movement, and I take the whole responsibility of it."

The schooled disciplinarian gracefully yielding to the stern logic and as stern determination of the volunteer officer, politely responded, "You are right, anyway, General, carry out your purpose and I will sustain you." He was, no doubt, proud of the practical worth and pluck of his subordinate, for, mounting his horse, he accompanied him to the field.

The line of march, at first, led directly into magnificent fields of corn, for, "as the crow flies," they moved to the sound of the cannon in their front. In due time approaching the Lafayette pike, near the mansion of Col. Clöud, a force of about five hundred of Forest's cavalry were encountered, who were doing the double duty of holding this important road and protecting a hospital that had been captured, filled mainly with severely wounded Federal soldiers. A company of rebel infantry, with their arms stacked, were laudably engaged in the work of carrying to hospital the wounded, both blue and grey.

The advancing column was clearly on ground that had been the Federal, but was then the rebel rear. Without ceremony the cavalry were routed and the unsuspecting company of infantry thoroughly surprised to find themselves in Federal hands. The officer in command, with the nonchalance of the reliable soldier, replied to inquiry as to what he was doing there, that he was "busy with his men carrying the wounded to hospital." To the further query as to whether he was

treating all alike, his reply distinguished him as a gentleman, for, with a frankness that was both amusing and refreshing, he replied, with a smile, "We carry all in, but, to tell the truth, give a *little* preference to our friends!" Pleased with the soldierly bearing of his captive, with whom he had no time to parley nor men to spare to guard him and his command as prisoners, the general gave him assurance of his appreciation of the service he was rendering, and, directing him to continue, abruptly concluded the interview with—"But these arms can be of no service to you in your humanitarian labor." In a moment the guns were broken into splinters, and their owners left for field duty, armed only with stretchers.

As the advancing column emerged from a little wood, and took the Lafayette road, they were in full view of masses of rebel cavalry that were posted on the adjacent high grounds to the east, who lost not an instant in opening on them with artillery, for the purpose of delaying their advance.

Every soldier knows that it requires cultivated coolness to march steadily, in open view, with the whole side of a column exposed to a raking artillery fire at short range ; but these determined men paid not the least attention to the efforts of the enemy, as section after section of artillery opened on them. Not a man changed his march step, save as, here and there, one wounded, fell.

At this point a portion of the disorganized command of General Negley was observed passing near the Cloud House, on their way to the rear, our column marching between them and the enemy from which they were escaping.

It was presently discovered that the highway route was not only unnecessarily perilous from the incessant flank fire, but led directly into the rear of the main line of the enemy. Accordingly, the command filed to the right, passed to the west of McDaniel's house, and through his orchard to the open fields beyond. The din of battle had become deafening, and through its smoke dim outlines of the engaged troops could be traced.

Thick clouds of dust had been raised by the march along the Lafayette road. This had not escaped the watchful eye of General Thomas, to whom it was a startling omen of good or ill, as was to the great Napoleon at Waterloo, the advancing column that might be either Grouchy or Blucher. With no guide to direct, but accepting all the chances of mistake, the column moved on, without a moment's halt, across the Mullis farm. In watching for any hint or sign that might be of service, in leading safely to the Federal line, a horseman was observed to approach toward their front, halt, dismount, and, climbing on a fence, make with his field-glass a careful survey of this ominous moving mass, that boded glorious hope or fell disaster.

Who or what he was could not be determined, nor could he decide the important question of his errand even with his field-glass, as the clothing of the men, as well as the colors, were so densely covered with dust as to obscure the blue and give all the appearance of grey. Taking the chances, the color-bearers were ordered to wave the colors that the dust

might be removed and unfold to the observer the stripes and stars, whoever he might be. Instantly recognizing friends he quickly mounted his horse. His delight may well be imagined as he spurred with utmost haste across the intervening open ground.

Saluting the General, he tersely inquired, "Whose troops are these?" and received the blunt, guarded reply, "These are my troops, sir!" *

"General, may I inquire your name?" said the officer.

"I am Brig.-General Steedman, commanding the 1st Division of the Reserve Corps!"

"I beg your pardon, General, I am Col. —, to-day serving on the staff of General Thomas, who directed me to come and ascertain what troops these are, as he seemed to have no expectation of their approach."

"You will please return at once, Col.— give my compliments to General Thomas, and tell him that I am advancing with my division, as rapidly as possible, to his support."

The terse but thoroughly dignified colloquy was ended, and the officer, saluting, wheeled his horse and quickly disappeared, the bearer of most gratifying information.

Continuing its march, close by the rear of the right of the rebel line, the division was soon halted within the magic semicircle around which the contest raged with incessant and increasing fury.

Alas ! how many rested there from weariness, that ere an hour had passed were halted in death.

Part Third.

ON THE RIGHT.

ACTION.

THEY had arrived on the stage to find the tragedy near its close. General Steedman, riding promptly forward to report in person, found General Thomas standing entirely alone under the clump of old dead trees, coolly surveying the scene, and directing the movements of the men that, as their ranks grew thinner, closed up around

“The Rock of Chickamauga!”

Calmly, as if the birds were singing amid the gnarled branches above and the hill-side thickets around, he returned the salutation of Steedman, and extended his hand most cordially. In and around his eyes played a

strange bewitching smile, the tell-tale of his delight, while his mouth retained that mysterious fixed stolidity that revealed the inflexible determination of a soul that knew not how to yield. His voice betrayed not a trace of that concern that must have shaken common hearts, as he said, in slow, measured words, "General Steedman, I have always been glad to see you, but never so glad as now. How many muskets have you got?"

"I have 7,500 muskets, general."

"It is a good force," said he, musingly; "and needed very badly." Turning to survey the kaleidoscope-field, he, in a few moments, added, "General Steedman, the enemy are occupying that wood," pointing to a position toward the left of his battle line, "and have been annoying us very much. You will form your command on the left of General Wood's men, and drive the enemy out of that timber."

Saluting adieu, and returning to his halted troops, they were immediately formed in line of battle, facing eastward and toward the wood, as ordered, with skirmish line advanced.

In such a moment men are amazingly prompt, and all were quickly in readiness. It was a beautiful array that steady line of bayonets, while officers, with drawn swords, moved hurriedly in doing their various duties. At the instant he was about to send them "Forward!" Steedman chanced to notice General Thomas, who beckoned his return to him. Desperate need demands exquisite caution. It was a moment of intensest interest. A single misstep could not be regained, and might be fatal. The most vital issues depended on one master-mind. In the shifting of such contending forces moments may produce momentous changes. Such was then the fact. They did not, however, escape the eye of the master who, on the approach of Steedman, said, with the utmost self-possession, "General, I have changed my mind in regard to the disposition of your command."

On the extreme right of the crescent line, which there faced directly south, the relative quiet on the ridge told plainly that it had changed masters, and was rapidly changing

occupants. The key to the Federal position had surely been abandoned, for the enemy gaining that hill the whole right of the curve was at their mercy by an enfilading fire, the centre, facing south, and the left, facing north, exposed to a fire directly in their rear, a situation in which no troops can possibly remain. That vital position should have been held at all hazards. The plainest duty demanded that, to the last man, it should have been defended. But it had been abandoned. Its loss would have appalled one less brave than Thomas, and driven to desperation one less gentle and forgiving. With steady, solemn finger, pointing toward the hill, he continued, quietly, slowly, impressively, as if he recognized the terrible blunder, but feared to be unjust, "General Negley's command occupied that ridge, a short time since, and why he has abandoned it I do not know. *Possibly*, he may have received an order from General Rosecrans. The enemy are now posting a battery there, and will shortly enfilade our position with the fire of its guns." At the very instant the flash of the guns

referred to, and the rattle of canister against the dry trees under which the two officers were conversing, gave ample and rather earnest confirmation of the conjecture just expressed. His voice being for an instant drowned, the general concluded, with great earnestness, "There ! there ! General Steedman, you can see their exact position now -- you must take that ridge !"

More desperate task never glimmered before mortal eyes, but, with a salute, and reply, "I'll do it, General !" Steedman rode to his command, that was standing ready to charge the wood they were then facing. They must move to the hill on the right. Minutes were invaluable, as the rebel General Hindman was, with all haste, crowding his division forward to occupy the newly-acquired key to the whole field. To hold this was to secure Rebel victory, to retake it, to snatch possible Federal victory from certain defeat. No time was spent in maneuvering. At the command, "Right—face ; forward—march !" the division was moving in column, the line of skirmishers marching in their position, in advance,

as formed for the first contemplated attack.

Passing close by the time-withered, shot-scared trees, the unostentatious indication of the headquarters occupied by the imperturbable Thomas, the veterans filed to the right, and, in a few moments, halted. Then facing to the left they were in two lines of battle, with skirmishers advanced, face to face with their gallant and defiant foes. Like doomed gladiators they stood in the arena, before them, rising with steep ascent, the densely-peopled crescent ridge. Eager eyes quickly observed the forbidding thicket that covered two-thirds of the ascent, above which the forest oaks rose in majestic beauty, and beyond, a peering belt of rocks that marked the edge of a bald plateau, covered thick with men brave as ever smiled at danger. Plainly every inch of the slope before them was planted with death, and, along the fragile line to their left, their exhausted comrades had all day struggled against overwhelming odds. They heard shouts of defiance and the charging volley answering defiant shout and volley. saw thousands of hungry tongues of flame cut

through the lurid smoke, and knew that everywhere red blood trickled from gaping wounds. But this carnival of horrors seemed to make no impress on the iron nerves of the observers. They were in the presence and under the very eye of the master at whose word they had always sped as arrow from the bow-string.

McCook, with his brigade, had been detached, by order of General Thomas, to guard the Dry Valley road from a possible flank movement of the enemy below the point of Steedman's attack. There five thousand men awaited the word, with the impetuous Whittaker, on the left, gallant Mitchell on the right; and Miller's Chicago Board of Trade and the 18th Ohio batteries ready at the auspicious moment to open their guns. Each looking to his arms, none seemed to think who would or would not return, as hastily the officers dressed the battle line. This was only the work of a few moments, during which General Granger, an interested spectator, saw his friend Steedman on the verge of a desperate venture,

from which he could scarce hope for his return.

It seemed like the last, a final parting, and riding forward he touched the shoulder of his friend and addressing him familiarly, as was his wont when feeling especially regardful, "Sted—my old boy," said he, "it's a going to be d——d hot in there!" to which it was possible to make only the reply, "Yes, General Granger, it looks so." The former, in the most feeling manner, continued, "Sted"—if anything should happen in the attack you are about to make on the enemy, have you got any requests to make of me?" The vein of tenderness was surely running rather deep for a man who saw an earthquake ready to swallow him up, and to the feeling and most fitting query the practical soldier replied, without the least glimmer of sentiment, "Yes, General Granger, if I fall in the fight, please see my body decently buried and my name spelled correctly in the newspapers." "Is that all?" "Yes, General, that is all," ended the colloquy. Not a little disappointed with the peculiar reception of his well-meant, kindly offices, Granger, spur-

ring his horse impetuously, rode away, muttering, "He's d——d cool, any how," while the stentorian voice of Steedman solved every doubt and drowned every fancy in the stern command—"Forward!"

The enemy had made most thorough arrangement for the defense of their position during the little time that had been occupied in preparation for the assault upon it, and from their cover must have observed, with mingled pleasure and pain, the beautiful alignment, the steady tread, the lines of glittering bayonets, the mounted field-officers in the full uniform of a holiday parade, as, seeming to court certain annihilation, they advanced quickly to the foot of the ridge, and the skirmishers pressed into the thicket, followed by the battle line. Then from the dense masses on the slope and crest, as from an overcharged cloud, burst the storm in appalling fury.

The rebels saw the advantage they had gained at such terrible cost and were determined that no power should wrest it from them. But the men who had received orders

to "take that ridge" did not, for an instant, hesitate. The battle line crowded through the dense undergrowth close at the heels of the skirmishers. All eyes were fixed on the crest above, when suddenly came a rattling volley full in their very faces. It was from a concealed line about forty yards from the top, that had unexpectedly risen as if out of the very earth. In an instant every skirmisher was killed or captured. Four or five wide gaps showed where the advancing lines had been swept entirely away. But the brave men silently closed up the frightful chasms, and, without orders, replied to the volley that had done such havoc, never for an instant breaking their advancing step as they loaded and delivered their fire.

In that meagre front of seven hundred yards twelve thousand muskets sent to and fro their vindictive messengers, while artillery hurled missiles everywhere. Splinters of flame leaped through the smoke that hugged the earth, which, with added passion and blood, made that hillside a very pandemonium, in all save regrets and groans. Officers of

the line shouted their commands and encouragements; generals, colonels, majors, staff-officers, and beardless orderlies, rode rapidly on every errand of duty. Seized as if with frenzy, both friend and foe struggled with a determination almost superhuman. The coolest self-possession strangely mingled with the fierce energy that holds life valueless when weighed against dishonor. In the wild tempest of passion one fierce purpose enslaved all others. There was no thought of gentle persuasion or remonstrance. An officer, noticing a scared soldier going to the rear, picked up a stone and knocked him down.

Captain Urquehart, commanding the 76th Ohio, fell from his horse. The next in rank instantly took his saddle, and quickly falling, another was scarcely seated until he also tumbles to the earth, then another, and another, the unscathed horse bearing off the field, at the battle's close, the sixth officer who had dared assume the desperate venture of commanding the gallant 76th.

In painful contrast, Colonel Jones, 40th Ohio, was found by Major Moe snugly hid-

den behind a tree one hundred yards in rear of his men, and, covering the recreant officer with a cocked pistol, marched him to the presence of General Steedman, who, after hearing his explanation, ordered him to instantly leave the field. The gallant major of the 40th, being notified of the cowardice and disgrace of his colonel, expressed the keenest regret, but, continuing to command, in five minutes fell dead at his post of duty.

Prodigies of valor were everywhere performed as the line of naked breasts surged against the incessant wave. Not an inch was won without appropriate sacrifice, but staunch and steady the thinning line moved on. Men did their duty almost independently, while officers gave every possible encouragement by word and example. To this gallant conduct there occurred but one other marked exception.

With every step advanced more vindictively did the enemy resist. With every foot gained the interest of the assailants deepened. Two-thirds of the distance up the slope had been wrested from the defenders, and clearly victory was possible if every man did his duty

as before. At this critical juncture a staff officer observing that the 115th Illinois had turned its back to the enemy, and was moving to the rear, reported the fact to his superior. A glance in the direction indicated, confirmed the startling announcement. The regiment was actually marching down the slope, their colonel riding in their rear. Steedman dashed at once along the line in their rear and firmly commanded, "115th Illinois—halt!" The men obeyed the command of their General, who instantly said, "Colonel Moore, this is all a mistake. I have given no orders to fall back. Move at once up the slope to your position." Instead of accepting this purposely offered opportunity to retrieve his error, the colonel replied, piteously, "General, my regiment has suffered terribly!" "I know it, Colonel Moore; all the regiments have suffered severely, and I am sorry for it, but we have neither time for regrets nor discussion, you will at once move up to your position." Having no taste for that "position," Moore replied that "he did not believe that he could get his men to go

up there again." A more shameless slander on true men coward lips never uttered, for Steedman, taking the colors from the hands of the color-bearer, replied, in stentorian tones, "You can go off the field and disgrace yourselves, but as God reigns, you shall not disgrace this flag," and wheeled his horse to retire. The humiliation was too deep, and wrung from a sergeant in the regiment an appeal, "General, *we* will defend that flag if *somebody* will command us!" The earnest words of the spirited private were a thrilling commentary, to which Steedman replied, "Brave boys, I'll command you!" and raising the flag above his head, intensified the assurance with, "I'll bear your flag if you 'll defend it. 'Tention!—115th Illinois! 'Bout — face! Forward—double-quick—march!" The commands were obeyed, and spurring his horse up the slope at a gallop, the men followed closely, rending the air with deafening shouts. The space they had abandoned was already filled with rebels, who poured out a stream of balls that tore the flag into shreds as it waved above their commander's head, and did like havoc in their

line. It was the work of but a few moments. A few leaps of the horse and the noble animal plunged forward to the earth in the grip of death. The rider was thrown violently, far over his head, and severely stunned. The brave men paused for nothing but their flag, which they bore to the front, where they fulfilled their heroic promise most faithfully.

Recovering somewhat from the shock produced by the fall, the General bound up his bleeding hands and mounted another horse. Dreadful battle raged all along his meager and weakened front. Hindman's Division of veteran rebels, with every advantage, had been forced to yield to the determined courage of two brigades; and then, with one deafening shout of challenge and one level volley—with naked bayonet they charge and carry the crest of the ridge.

The gallant rebels grandly faced the murderous steel, bayonets were crossed in personal encounter, and the blaze from the musket burned the surface from which the red blood trickled. Men seized the arms of their adversaries, and with all their strength struggled

for mastery. Being mingled together, fighting hand to hand without time to load, blow after blow fell thick and fast, with musket clubbed and every means available. Many a Jonnie, seized by his clothing, was forced to march to the rear to swell the list of unwilling prisoners. It was a fierce melee, in which the soldier's honors may be fairly divided between victor and vanquished. But the coveted crest of the ridge was at last wrested from its brave defenders, who fled over the open ground to the wood beyond for cover.

It is long to tell, but forty-five minutes had not elapsed since the opening volley, and on that hill-side slope, in length not more than seven hundred and a width of two hundred yards, there had fallen, killed or wounded, eleven hundred patriot men, with at least an equal number of their foes. The lifting smoke exhibited along that slope a view that would have been appalling but for the necessity of guarding well the advantage they had been sacrificed to attain.

The shattered lines reformed in utmost haste. Miller's Battery galloped to a position

on the ridge, and poured a murderous fire into the woods beyond. No precaution was unwisely taken, for but little time elapsed before a long deep line of grey moved from their cover. With steady step and compact front they advanced into the open ground. Shot and shell swept them from flank to flank, from front to rear ; musket balls rained in their faces and men fell fast at every step. But the gaps thus made closed up as do grooves cut in water. The first line after delivering a volley fell to the ground to load, while the next advanced and delivered their fire, repeating which they came on and on. Their precision was beautiful to see, their soldier's devotion actually sublime, for death messenger in level flood swept that open ground. Stung by a pain that only a soldier can feel, they scorned everything that intervened between them and their lost position, and in desperate frenzy rushed toward the shattered Federal line, that as heroically defied the reckless overpowering multitude. Not a man stood there in whose breast did not beat a hero's heart, and every hand did a hero's duty well.

Miller's Battery had not for an instant ceased to send its shot through the advancing horde, and splashed its canister along their front. Only the dead and wounded halted. The heavens were shut out, earth trembled 'neath the passionate footfalls, and the air hissed like a seething cauldron.

Steedman rode up to Lieut. Closskey, in command of the battery. The youthful officer stood beside a limber chest, with his elbow resting on one of the wheels and supporting his chin as if in the most gratifying contemplation of effective target practice. Being directed to "double-shot" his pieces, he turned his head without raising his chin from his hand, to reply, laconically, "'Been doing it for ten rounds, General.'" "Then treble-shot them," replied the commander, for the need was awful, and something must be done. The order was a little strong for the young artilleryist, who simply replied, "Never heard of it before," and turning to his men coolly commanded, "Treble shot 'em, boys!" The guns fairly screamed with the treble charges that tore the rifling out of every piece in sending

the sweeping death warrant into the advancing line. But their front rank firing and crouching to the ground, the next leaped over them like a tiger lightly bounding forward on his prey, in steady indifference to the missiles that beat thick and fast about them. Their path was strewn with their wounded and dead, red blood trickled from gaping wounds into the thirsty earth; but suddenly arose the unearthly yell, and then ceasing their fire, the wave surged forward with bristling front of naked steel. Gallantry, spurred by desperation, could do no more than they did there. Each step they advanced was made through perils multiplied, the very air they breathed thickened with death. Mowed down in frightful swathes, their front became ragged as they neared their goal, until at last, half staggering and half reeling, within thirty yards of the Federal muzzles, their colors for an instant halted, and then in wild dismay the shattered remnants of as brave a line as ever jeered at desperate chances, turned in flight to seek the shelter of the woods.

With fury indescribable the battle had raged

over the entire field. Immediately to the left of this slope the 21st Ohio, under Lieut.-Col. Arnold McMahon, with others, fought all day among the wounded and dead they had no time to remove or care for, that gallant regiment losing there in killed and wounded one hundred and forty-nine of its men, and when at last surrounded and fighting hand to hand, one hundred and fifty that death and wounds had spared, took the chambers out of their Colt's rifles, that they might be useless to the enemy, and then in defiant humiliation surrendered.

General Harker—gallant Harker—did his duty grandly on the immediate left of the burnt cabins, while at the center rents were continually torn in the clouds of grey with shot, shell and canister.

Hindman's repulse afforded an interval of security, during which Steedman galloped over to General Thomas, that he might report in person the situation of his command and receive direct further expressions of his commander's wishes. The terrible work had been

done under his own watchful eye, how well none could better understand than he.

With knightly chivalry Thomas clasped the bloody hand that was extended to him, and said impressively, "Gen. Steedman, you have saved my army. Your loss must be very great."

"Yes, General," replied Steedman, "my command has suffered severely, but the position is ours."

"That saves us from ruin," replied he with his usual calmness.

Then the patterning shots that precede a charge gave warning, and Steedman galloped back to the hill to find the battle on again. The respite in front had been very brief, as our gallant foes reformed in hot haste and again came in solid masses to the charge, firing and falling as before, thus sustaining an unbroken stream of balls, until again the terrific yell and the thicket front of bayonets advanced, again to crumble away, falter, and at last to turn and flee. Eight times they trod that fire-swept and death-strewn ground. They stumbled over their fallen friends, their

feet slipped in fresh warm blood, as they hurried bravely forward or rushed frantically from the red edge of the destroying angel's scythe.

The hours gliding unnoticed by, evening at last dropped her curtain softly down to enshroud the mangled men with their own battle smoke around them. But ere the scene be shut from view look down the slope and mark the path of Steedman's two brigades, look along this crest where they stand, grim with dust, determined, undaunted, though exhausted, starving, famishing, their arms in their hands, and over them *our* tattered Stripes and Stars!! It is historic ground over which these citizen soldiers have borne the banner of the free, 'mid scenes that neither pen or pencil can portray, nothing picture faithfully, but the yet warm bodies of twenty-nine hundred and eighty-five of their number, that dead lie silently, or wounded are writhing there.

The thick winrow on the left marks well where Brig.-General Walter Whittaker did his duty. Receiving a severe shell-wound that

forced him to retire from action, command of his brigade devolved on Col. Champion, 96th Illinois, who also suffered similar misfortune, and, wrecked in health, will carry to his grave honorable scars. There on the right the spotted earth shows ample evidence of how Colonel John G. Mitchell won the golden opinions deserved by the brave. No soldier will withhold the honors due a soldier who has fairly won distinction, and the world accords its homage to human valor as if it were a quality half divine. All will agree that the gallantry with which these officers led their respective brigades could not be surpassed.

But to recount the merits and award the meed of praise due to the deserving, is alike impossible. The world will merge all individuality in the great result, for officers and privates alike cover themselves with glory, who, for their country, in brief battle, as these have done, leave more than half their number on the field,—

The living crown with garlands,
Tears and laurels for the dead.

Part Four.

RETRÉAT.

As two exhausted crippled gladiators would glare at each other, so stood and glared the shattered lines of blue and grey. As if all the world had been spectators they had striven for mastery in that lone arena.

A day of carnage had been ended by exhaustion and the gloom of darkness, through which neither friend nor foe could clearly discern the hope that cheers the warrior's soul. Determined purpose had been met by resistance as determined, and the issue in even balance seemed to stand suspended.

In the rear of a mere fragment of the loyal army with which the battle had the previous day begun were hundreds of stragglers, men who in the conflict had became detached, the

remnants of disorganized commands and those who, in this as in every battle of every army, seek by instinct a place of safety. The firm control of discipline that ordinarily directs the movement of all the appurtenances of battle had for many hours been lost, and in the rear consequent disorder and confusion prevailed.

All day had the rebels held Thomas and his little command in the hollow of a hand that they had vainly tried to close and in it crush him. He had, however, no thought of being crushed or even of attempting escape from the toils. In the darkest hour of the afternoon, when, standing beneath the dead trees, he directed an aid, the only soldier near, to "Go to Gen. Harker, present my compliments, and direct him to push his line"—on the left of the burning cabins—"with every man he can put into it." The young officer started instantly but after proceeding a few steps, turned, saluted, and inquired, "General, after communicating your order to Gen. Harker, *where* shall I report to you." With evident impatience at the implied suggestion that he might

change either purpose or position, Thomas stamped his foot sternly and answered,—
“Here, sir, here!”

Like a lion he stood defiantly at bay. At Waterloo Wellington musingly implored the coming of “night or Blucher.” Thomas communed only with an inflexible will, and steadily held his front to that of his adversary. As disasters multiplied so multiplied his determination, and, partaking of the spirit of the master, as the line grew thinner it grew stronger and more unyielding.

Steedman had brought with him at noon one and ahalf million rounds of ammunition, which had been used by his own troops and those who had exhausted their supply. His men had gathered the cartridges from the boxes of their own and the rebel dead and wounded. On the hill to the left the 21st, 89th and 9th Ohio, and 22d Michigan had, in the same manner, obtained their supply for hours, the men often crawling forward to where the rebels had fallen to obtain the pellets of ball and powder, treasures of priceless value. And when all were exhausted, the 21st,

as did also the 9th Ohio, charged again and again against the advancing line of the enemy without a shot to return for their volley, with the naked bayonet alone repulsing them, and even capturing rebel prisoners. Such was the desperate straight, such had been the battle all along the line. Without a moment's respite, a mouthful of food or a drop of water, since early morning, nightfall found these undaunted men in their places, men whose names should be held the synonym for all there is of heroism.

But their invincible leader was himself only a subordinate to Major-General Rosecrans, commander of the entire army, who, personally directing the movements on the field during the beginning of the action, had, in the exercise of unexplainable wisdom, retired with his staff to Chattanooga, into which delectable spot, at the head of gay escorts, with fluttering battle-flags, had ridden two of his three corps commanders, unaccompanied by a single organized squad of their respective commands. Arriving there early in the afternoon of Sunday, the 20th, from that point

he sent to Secretary Stanton the following telegram:

CHATTANOOGA, TENN., SEPT. 20, 1863,
4 O'CLOCK, P. M.

HON. E. M. STANTON,
Secretary of War,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

My army has been whipped and routed.

(Signed,) *Rosecrans*

W. S. ROSECRANS,
Major-General.

Strangely enough, from this safe point eight miles distant, General Thomas received at dark on the 20th a communication from his chief. Immediately sending for Steedman, he communicated to him the fact that he had received orders from General Rosecrans to "fall back on Rossville,"—adding, with a pleasant touch of humor to Steedman, who had not been during that or the previous day over tenacious on the point—"you know we *must* obey orders."

Difficult as it had been to follow his own determination to stay, even with the aid of

the gallant men who joined his command from the disorganized corps, sternly as he had determined to yield nothing until positively wrested from him by force or prowess against which he had no power to contend, General Thomas now found that the question of retiring in obedience to the orders received, involved some embarrassments. The enemy were everywhere close upon him, his line so bent upon itself that its actual rear was not more than a thousand yards in extent. He had, however, the advantage of darkness, a disappointed, thoroughly battered and exhausted foe. Inquiring of Steedman if he could leave his present position in safety, he received the prompt answer, "Yes, General, I can," to which he tersely responded, "How?" The proposed method was at once explained by pointing to the ridge immediately at the rear of the one occupied by his command and of about the same height—"On that ridge I can place my artillery and retire my infantry under the protection of the guns."

At once accepting the proposed method as practicable, General Thomas added, "You

will move along by the ridge until you strike the Dry Valley road; move far enough so that the rear of your command when you halt will rest opposite the point of the ridge, and there await orders. I will be on that point as soon as I have withdrawn all the troops from the line into the Dry Valley road. *Meet me there!*"

At once proceeding to direct the movements, the whole line, with caution and under cover of darkness, commenced to withdraw as proposed, a maneuver that was effected with surprising rapidity and practical success.

After placing his four-gun battery on the ridge, Steedman formed his line of battle, and 'bout facing them they commenced to march peaceably down the slope. But instantly arose the rebel yell, the line was, however, quickly beneath the crest, and the guns opening from the ridge in the rear not only apprized the enemy of immediate danger, but gave strong confirmation to their idea that fresh reinforcements had arrived, which was probably one very important reason why further active pursuit was not attempted.

But the vigilant rebels were not at all idle. Whenever it seemed practicable they advanced and gathered a harvest of prisoners as spoils. Thus Colonel McMahon and the remnant of the gallant 21st Ohio were added to their trophies. Receiving no orders to leave they remained, and by a singular misfortune, Colonel Lefever and his 22d Michigan, who were on the extreme left of General Whittaker's Brigade, and next to the position of the 21st Ohio, were also compelled to surrender. The colonel was marching down the slope to the rear, as directed, when General Granger, who knew nothing of the proposed abandonment of the field, chanced to notice him and inquired what he was doing, to which Lefever replied that he was obeying the orders of General Steedman to retire, and that he understood that the whole line was moving to the rear. Struck with astonishment, and with a desire to correct what seemed to him to be an error, Granger assured him that it must certainly be a mistake, and directed him to go back to his position, as the field must be held, adding that he would go

to General Steedman and make satisfactory explanation. It was an unintentional but fatal error, as the instant that Lefever 'bout faced the 22d Michigan, they were on their march to the Andersonville death pen and Libby Prison !

Obeying his orders Steedman halted his command with its rear at the terminal point of the ridge indicated when he reported to Thomas, whom he found waiting there seated on a log. The hastily withdrawn army was already in advance moving down the Dry Valley road, and Steedman received his final instructions to protect the rear of the whole command with the one of his regiments in best condition to fight. To this duty the 79th Illinois was assigned, moving in readiness at any moment to select position and with the support of the four-gun battery accept battle if the advancing enemy offered it.

It was a cheerless night march, for adding to the exhaustion and sufferings of each was the recollection of those left behind, alas ! how many never to clasp hands with them again. But unhumiliated though crushed, they march-

ed westward through the Dry Valley gap in Mission Ridge, and filing to the north along its base about midnight arrived at Rossville, and ascending the ridge again turned their faces toward the enemy.

Orders as well as necessity requiring a halt at this point, further dispositions for security were immediately arranged.

The main body of troops being posted on the crest of the ridge were in readiness for an attack in their front, a position from which they could at any moment retire, they being now in extended line and directly between the enemy and Chattanooga. The additional points of danger were the Dry Valley Pass on the right and Rossville Pass on the left, through which lies the road from Chattanooga to Ringgold. To gain possession of either or both of them would afford incalculable advantage to the pursuers, as they might then by desperate effort thrust themselves between the little army and their base, where a multitude of refugees had gathered with Major-Generals Rosecrans, Crittenden and McCook.

Steedman being in the rear arrived some time after Thomas and found the latter officer—who had been on duty all day without a morsel of food or aught to quench his thirst—lying on the ground with his feet toward a camp-fire, his military coat buttoned up close to his throat, his right hand supporting his head, with his elbow resting on the ground. Stolid and imperturbable, he looked like a worried lion waiting for his prey. Without moving, he asked Steedman if he could “picket the Dalton Road.” On receiving an affirmative answer, and acquiescing in the proposition to place two pieces of artillery on the ridge near the pass, he added, “you will attend to it,” and relapsed into his musings.

General Mitchell was directed to throw forward a regiment with a picket post and pickets in advance, at the point where the road to Cleveland and to Lafayette crosses the Ringgold pike.

The Dry Valley Pass was held by cavalry, and the little army dropped unconsciously into a temporary repose such as only utter exhaustion can bring.

The cavalry advance of the enemy approached very early to find that they were being waited for, soon followed by the infantry, who were received in the same spirit of defiance that they had previously experienced. The skirmishing was severe and artillery duels continued throughout the entire day.

The night of Monday, the 21st, proved to be dark, to which was added a dense misty fog that greatly aided in the necessary abandonment of the position. The difficulty of effecting the movement was greatly enhanced by the vigilance of their watchers, now spurred by chagrin at the escape of their prey on the previous night. This necessitated the utmost attention. In the most cautious manner officers passed along the line and communicated the order to fall back to each man singly in a whisper, and in such silence as danger and darkness begets, they successfully withdrew, leaving the Johnnies to discover at their leisure their vacant places.

A dreary march was that four miles to Chattanooga, but all recognized a blessing in the

darkness and the friendly fog that—a real cloud by night in which they walked—enabled them to escape multiplied perils if not disaster.

At seven o'clock on the morning of the 22d the lifting fog-cloud showed a battle line of blue around Chattanooga, with a frail but valuable line of works before them, and quickly thereafter, on the wooded slopes of Mission Ridge, an accumulating horde of grey, that rapidly deployed there.

From that position, enviable for its beauty as for its military strength, they looked down upon the colors that had been shot-riddled in the previous encounters, and heard "Hail Columbia," "The Star Spangled Banner," and "Rally Round the Flag, Boys," mingled with the boom of guns that delivered shotted salutes in defiance of their pursuers.

The two days' work on Chickamauga's field was ended. To meet again and make historic this new selected battle-ground, they had parted there—the blue, with a battle lost without defeat, the grey, having won a battle without victory.

WAR MEMORIES.

TO THE READER.

Although the following sketches have no proper connection with "Steedman and his Men," they are presented here without apology. They have been selected from a series of War Memories written by the same author during the past few years, for the purpose of preserving from oblivion circumstances that are without the pale of the historian's labor, and yet are a part of real history.

Prepared for the perusal of the general reader, as much explanation has been used as would be necessary to make the incidents understood, the style of presentation being modeled as nearly as possible on that which seems most satisfactory to non-military listeners, when, for their benefit, an old campaigner "fights his battles o'er." Of necessity there occurs some repetition of language and illustration, but each sketch is as independent of the others as their character is diversified.

The writer hopes their style may not be unsatisfactory nor the facts uninteresting to the reader.

WAR MEMORIES.

NO. 1.

D R U R Y.

Two giants were summoning their power for a fierce collision. The Federal army, under Gen. Rosecrans, was in a mysterious way straggling together on the Chickamauga, and the rebel forces, under the veteran Gen. Bragg, were, with all possible dispatch, forming a junction with reinforcements from the east under the grim warrior, Longstreet. "There was hurrying to and fro," amid the rough hills and woodlands that line the historic stream.

There is always much mystery in either army as to exactly where and how the opposite

forces are being disposed for an approaching contest, and each strives to fathom the purpose of the other. Each, therefore, by various ways, watches so far as possible the movements of the other, and at a proper time it is not uncommon for detachments of troops to be sent out to "feel for the enemy." These efforts at discovery often lead to miniature battles—a sort of prelude to a grand chorus, rendered in the crash of sabre, musket and cannon, the score written in corpse and blood.

Two days before this battle, the 2d Division of the 4th army corps, commanded by Brig.-Gen. Van Cleve, made such a reconnoisance. We were to "look" for the enemy, and we found him, we were to "feel" for the enemy, and we felt him. It was a bright and pleasant afternoon, and fording the narrow, shallow stream immediately below Lee and Gordon's mill, we were on forbidden ground. The enemy in force lay back among the hills—a tiger in his lair—offering no resistance to our passage, but filing to the right we soon found that, being strangers, we might be taken in. My regiment, under command of Col.

P T Swayne, was in reserve, marching at the rear, and at various points before us the movement of troops for battle on a small scale, could be taken in at a glance.

The infantry in staunch line, like a blue wave tipped with a glistening forest of muskets form on a range of low hills that stretch across the front, cavalry in long lines, with quick pace file to the right and left and deploy to support and protect the flanks, while batteries of artillery hurry at the trot or gallop to their various positions on the field. It is but little time until all are in place, and the rifle-shots of the skirmishers become thicker, artillery opens with smoke and flash and thunder. The line of battle warily advances, feeling its way over precarious ground. Thus the glittering picture, the glorious panorama, merges into a frightful drama of passion, blood and death.

Being held in reserve we marched along the wood directly in rear of the center of our command, and close up to the base of the range of small hills on top of which our line was formed. At the base of the center of the

elevated ground, on the right of our road, was an open meadow, on the left a corn-field. The regiment was halted in column, faced to the right without doubling and marched just over the line of fence, halted, left-faced into column so that they were parallel with the road, and over the fence in the meadow. Here we waited developments.

A little before reaching the meadow I had seen a book on the ground, and reading matter being both scarce and desirable, and thinking that this might be something racy, I dismounted and picked it up. Imagine my disgust when I found it was an arithmetic. I was rendered enthusiastic by the scene, and riding with the field officers at the head of the regiment, instead of in my place directly in its rear, forgot the stupid book I was carrying in my hand. Colonel Swayne seeing it, and fancying that it might be a treasure, asked me for it just as he received directions to halt and await orders. He moved the command into the meadow, as I have stated, and immediately commenced perusing its pages. He turned over a few

leaves, and, asking for a pencil, commenced figuring on a fly leaf. At this moment a rebel battery opened, and toward us came hissing a cannon shot. He coolly sang out to the men, "Lie down." Oh! it was beautiful to witness the alacrity with which that command was obeyed. The regiment in an instant was fairly plastered to the earth. On came the shot, hissing, shrieking. If human ear ever heard a fearful truth, the shot was coming directly toward us. How frightful to untried nerves is the song of the fiendish messenger! How like a flash of lightning grave thoughts go quivering through the brain! Why are the men ordered to "lie down" for protection, while here are six officers on horseback at the head of the column sitting like statues! Oh! for a tree, a stone, a hole in the ground, any place where a frightened soul might find rest. The song of the coming shot has intensified into a shriek, and in an instant crashes into the fence, not ten feet from the column; another follows instantly, and strikes the ground a few rods in front; another goes howling and hissing over us, a

shell dashes into the corn-field and explodes, unseen cavalrymen scatter in all directions for an instant and then return. Quick, fast, howl, hiss, shriek, they drop to the right—left—front—rear—I look up and Swayne sits on his grey horse calmly figuring away on that blank leaf. I had no taste for mathematics. Suddenly he commands “Attention!” The men spring to their feet. “Boys, there is a yellow-jacket nest here,” said he. “Right face. Forward—march. Halt. Left face.” And they are again in column as before. They have moved about ten feet, but before the command to lie down can be given, a solid shot strikes exactly where they had laid, plows the ground for a rod—ricochets, strikes again, and plowing, bounding, it flies along the whole length of the regiment, and in its frenzy goes on and on over the meadow. All saw how narrow the escape, and the men burst into loud laughter at what they supposed a joke on the part of the Colonel, but he assured them that the yellow-jackets had disturbed his horse.

The command “Lie down” was not repeated—it was unnecessary. There are things that

men do without orders, and one is, to lie down promptly when cannon shots are enquiring after them. That yellow-jackets' nest no doubt saved the lives of twenty men, for the shot went directly down the column where they had lain an instant before. "There," says Swayne, "is the length of the fish." "What fish?" inquires Lieut.-Col. Cummings. "Why, the one given here—'whose head is four inches long, the tail twice as long as the head, added to two-fifths of the length of the body, and the body is as long as the head and tail both.' The length is forty inches."

He had actually, amid all this—to me such frightful peril—bothered his brain to figure out that problem. He had been under fire before, I hadn't. Battle was his business; it wasn't mine. In fact I thought it a very poor place for a surgeon—a non-combatant. It looked to me as though I might not be preserved for future usefulness. I very much desired to go away. I looked ardently to the rear, where I ought to be, but I could not go without being seen by the command, and hearing those words, more frightful than cannon

shot—"There goes a coward." I clasped my bridle reins convulsively, and didn't stir. I was positively afraid, in the face of this shower of cannon shot, to incur the contempt merited by a coward. I thought of my mother, and said to myself,—I had rather die than that she should be ashamed of me. That is about the style of my courage when first under fire. I fancy I was not the only one of those mounted men to whom some other spot would have been more inviting. But Swayne and Cummings coolly discussed the fish question.

The circumstance most trying to me was, that I had nothing to do—could do nothing—could go no where. Imagine yourself thus situated. Not a thing to divert the attention and relieve the mind from the frightful study of the chances as you hear first the discharge of the gun and then in a few moments the shot comes howling, hissing, shrieking towards you. "Is it for you?" What a fearful question as your ear takes in every shade of its hideous noise. It goes over you and is harmless. How you gloat over the fact that there

is one less chance of danger—when boom goes the gun, and hiss comes another messenger, and you are again thrilled by the same fearful query.

But the fire thickens in front—murky battle-smoke obscures the cloud of dust arising along the road which has guided their aim, and our shower of shot and shell lessens. That dark cloud and the drama being enacted there is strangely inviting, which fact, together with the agony of nothing to do, led me to ask Col. Swayne for permission to go to the front. My request was granted and I was not slow in galloping up the road, along which an occasional shot still plowed its way. On the top of the hill was a house, and in its large front yard, under a cluster of trees, was Division Headquarters. Immediately before us the line of battle, and just beyond this the heavy line of skirmishers were feeling for the enemy, and were felt for very ardently in return. I noticed that all the trees about headquarters were occupied on the side opposite the direction of the shots, which were splashing around indiscriminately. While I was regretting the

absence of another tree, came the sad news, "Capt. Drury's shot," and directly from around the bend in a crooked lane came men with a stretcher, and poor Drury, in full uniform, pale—bloody—ghastly—shot through the abdomen. He was Captain of the First Wisconsin Battery and Artillery Chief of the Division. He was a rolicking, reckless, gallant officer—loved by everybody but the enemy, who heard altogether too often from his guns at short range. Mounted on a splendid horse, in the full uniform of a captain of artillery, he had ridden, against admonition of danger, to a point in advance of the skirmish line, in search of a good spot for his guns, when a sharp-shooter, with murderous aim, put an end to his inquiries and interest in that particular matter of business.

The Division Surgeon hastily examined his wound, pronounced it very dangerous, ordered an ambulance to take him to the rear, and directed me to go with him, dress his wounds and make him as comfortable as I could in any house I could find. I was not reluctant to obey the order.

Drury sat supported in the ambulance as it was driven as carefully as possible over the stony roads. He suffered excruciating pain, breathed with great difficulty, but said not a word. He was a short, fat man, with jolly round face and long curling black hair. But his face now showed his agony, and I shall never forget his looks as he sat there naked to the waist, that he might feel cooler and breathe freer. We went some distance before we saw a house, but at last we found, nestled in the woods, a rough log building, with a porch in front, on one end of which was a rude bed-room. Things were topsy-turvy all over that realm of domestic bliss. I took possession of the bed-room for Drury, and proceeded to investigate his wound. A musket ball had entered his right side so that I believed it had passed through the liver, and ranging upward had perforated the diaphragm and lungs. I cut the ball out from between two ribs on the back, where it was wedged fast and firm. The cutting and tugging at the bullet to secure its removal did not cause the iron-hearted Drury to wince. He coolly

asked me, " How dangerous is this business?"

I admired Drury—I loved him. Think then of this cruel question—the question that I had been silently dreading, and which I now evaded by replying—"Wait until I get you dressed up in good shape, and we shall see." In due time all was completed, and Drury sat propped up in bed. I had not the heart to tell him my opinion. With an ounce ball tearing through those important organs, who could entertain a hope. With my experience, I had none. To face that question made me as much of a coward as the shot and shell had an hour before, and I must confess that I had determined in some manner to get away without answering it. But my effort was fruitless. The eagle eye of a hero was on me. I do not doubt that he divined my purpose, and at the proper moment bluntly asked: "Doctor, tell me now, will I live or die?" I was face to face with the responsibility, and guided by my reluctance and a tenderness begotten of my regard for him as a man and soldier, I began by saying, "Captain, you are a brave man"—at which point I was interrupted by a

look that paralyzed my tongue. His face scowled, his eyes flashed in evident scorn at my circumlocution, and the mere fact that I had seemed to raise in my mind a question as to his courage and readiness to bear with indifference my answer, I began again, and said frankly,—“You have at least *ten* chances to die where you have *one* to live.” Drury looked for a moment calmly downward, his face assuming the expression of cool determination. Suddenly he raised his eyes, and looking me full in the face, replied, “By G—, I’ll take the *odd* chance and *live!*”

My orders had been obeyed and I had no time to linger. I bade him good-bye, with a sincere but hidden sorrow, though not a little amused at the adjustment he proposed to make with death. Having reported my proceedings to S. D. Turney, Surgeon of Division, I returned to my regiment.

Having felt for and found the enemy, the command withdrew across the river, and at once were begun the final preparations for a conflict that gave to history the desperate struggle on the Chickamauga. Each hour brought

duties and circumstances that filled it to overflowing, and amid the terrible scenes that followed I had forgotten Drury, whom I supposed already dead. One day in Chattanooga, probably two weeks after this occurrence, an orderly found me and gave me a message which he said was from an officer on the other side of the river. It read :

“Woods: I am doing bully. Send me some morphine.

“DRURY.”

He had been sent for on the night of the day he was wounded, carried in an ambulance over rough roads twelve miles to Chattanooga, thence across the river, where, to my utter amazement, this note assured me he was standing firmly by his proposition to take “the odd chance and live.” And live he did, for a few months afterwards I met in the field, “doing the States some service,” the same Captain Drury, as jolly as ever, apparently not the least concerned because of his having failed to make my professional opinion good by promptly dying. Long may he wave, a living example of what may be done by Pluck and Providence.

WAR MEMORIES.

NO. 2.

A BRAVE BOY.

In one of the engagements on the right of Atlanta, a large number of men of the brigade to which I belonged were wounded. I well remember the place by the fact that a saw-mill stood immediately at the rear of our battle line, and that in approaching Brigade Headquarters the rebel shells flew close over our heads and fell into the mill-pond immediately to the left and uncomfortably near. The wounded received their primary dressing in the yard of this saw-mill in a position somewhat exposed, and from which some of the surgeons ingloriously ran away and hid, being invisible until after the battle had ceased and

all danger passed away. I see the paltroons yet, as they came sneaking from their hiding places, ashamed, as they should be, of themselves. Manhood is never more sunken than when covered with the consciousness of cowardice, never sinks lower than when duty is abandoned because of fear. I refer to this incident with regret, as it was certainly a rare one, and to call attention to the necessity of infusing into the non-combatant branch of the volunteer service the discipline and the military pride of the soldier, the officer and the gentleman. I do not mention their names, because their mothers may yet be living.

In the action referred to a young man received an injury, for which I was compelled to amputate his leg immediately below the knee. The operation was made at the field hospital, which had been so located that when the advance of the battle was ended it was some distance in the rear.

He very urgently requested me to come on the next day and dress the stump, making the appeal with such earnest pathos that I assured him that if the brigade of which I had

charge as chief medical officer did not move so as to make it impossible, I would do so. He was rather young, fine looking, with a round pale face, and such intelligent expression, that I could not help thinking that there were those who were proud of him, and who, alas, did not know that in the dreary forest he lay mutilated, with no opportunity for tender care, and with many chances to lie beneath a yellow mound in the wilds of Georgia.

Returning to the field I joined Assistant-Surgeon Carr, who alone faced the danger from which the other surgeons had fled. There was much work for us two, and the night spent close under the guns of the enemy, with continuous picket firing close at hand and an occasional shell howling over us, was both long and dreary enough. But something in that wounded soldier's manner so interested me that I thought frequently of him, and on the following morning rode away from all other duties to attend to his request. I had in haste left him on the operating table, and found him lying on a bed made of cedar boughs spread on the ground, one of a long row of

sick and wounded, covered only by the tent fly, a number of which were so joined together as to form a long double shed in the field. He expressed great satisfaction at seeing me, pressing my hand kindly and thanking me for my attention. While the attendants were bringing the necessary appurtenances, I conversed with him and was surprised that not a murmur escaped his lips, although he was then suffering and had spent the long night in torture. Kneeling by his side on the ground, I slowly removed the blood-soaked bandages. For some reason the wound was exceedingly sensitive, and despite all the care I could exercise the dressing was a painful process.

The muscles of his placid face would every instant tell the story of his suffering, and even his grand courage was not sufficient to suppress all manifestations of pain, but every few minutes the sigh would escape from his unwilling lips. All this was noticed by a *half-sick* recruit who lay by his side, but who had not become inured to the hardships and perils of actual campaigning. He arose, time after time, and looked at the mutilated limb, studied

eagerly the bloody bandage, the adhesive straps and the stitches that held the flaps together, and seemed to absorb the pain the poor boy suffered until his own cheeks became white and then half fainting lay down until another moan would arouse him to study the sickening sight again. He seemed absolutely terrified, as if he felt sure that the next amputated leg must be his. No one paid any particular attention to him, but at last he could no longer refrain, and made some remark in a tremulous tone about the terrible look of the wound, and how awful it was to lose a limb. The brave boy, as if his manhood had been assailed, relaxed his hold on the stump, turned his face toward the cringing, unwounded, and only half-sick complainer, and looked one such look of proud contempt upon him as I had never seen, then turning toward me, his mild, pallid face beaming with the grand expression of the hero, replied, "*I think it better to have lost my leg than to have no country*"

I know not whether he did or did not finally recover, but living or dead his young manhood was sublimely great.

WAR MEMORIES.

NO. 3.

AN HOUR AT CHICKAMAUGA.

A battle is really a monster tragedy. As a whole, it is entirely incomprehensible, and its description utterly impossible. To one who has ever looked on an actual conflict, where two hundred thousand veterans luxuriate

“In the proud joy that warriors feel,
In foemen worthy of their steel,”

all the efforts of pen and pencil are stupidly tame. Scraps only can be gathered from what has been felt and seen by individuals, only single heart-throbs can be counted. Many circumstances conspire to produce this result, and each of these is of vast proportions. The immense size of the stage, battle usually raging

over it at intervals, producing a series of conflicts, each differing essentially from the other; the vast number of the actors, the varied combinations, and the multiplicity of form in which the thunderbolts are hurled, combine to render it impossible for any one to see more than a mere speck, and each actor can only give his view of the kaleidescope of carnage — the carnival of blood.

But to the participants there is much more than the simple movement of the human chessmen on the checkered field. Few men who have any refinement of soul can rid themselves of a dread of taking human life. The hero of twenty battles will scarce ever, even in the utmost confidence, tell you when and where he felt sure he killed his man. Proud that he has done his duty, he shuts his eyes to the unfortunate man or men who stood in the way of his well-aimed musket. Not that he regrets that some must have fallen at his hand, but he does not wish to know the individual or to be certain of the fact. In a general way he feels that a duty has been performed, but in particularizing comes a re-

gret for having possibly quenched a life that was full of actual though misguided goodness; quenched all its aspirations, all its hopes, and even repentance itself, while behind all are father, mother, friends, who have loved tenderly, and who for the lost mourn so bitterly.

There is, however, something in battle that rouses the spirit, that transforms the soldier, calling into service his pride, his courage, indeed every great quality that distinguishes him from the inanimate clod. That, from the after contemplation of which he shrinks, he then plunges into with the earnestness of desperation, speeding with iron coolness and aim deliberate as death, the very missiles whose effects he afterwards scarce dare think of.

How indifferent he becomes to personal danger; he rushes into the "imminently deadly breach," performing feats of valor unconsciously, and afterwards wonders why or how he thus thrust his life into the very jaws of death. There is something grand in the air of a battle-field, with its moving lines approaching warily, the first glimpse of the foe, the first ominous boom of artillery, the first firing of the skirmish-

ishers, the first volley of musketry, the first charge, the thunder reverberating along the lines, from woodland and valleys, from covert places and points of especial advantage, that rouses all the proud spirit, that electrifies the whole being, and individuals become nothing, even to themselves, a man becomes nothing, being swallowed up in the great mass that is now one grand giant, hurling blow on blow against another giant whose staunch armor seems impenetrable, whose blows irresistible. To a man who has thus been individually lost, merged as a mere atom in the one great giant of battle, his life and all there was of him for the time forgotten, there is no battle picture but the battle itself; nothing arouses him to the sublime height but the actual tragedy, and to one who has never even looked on the drama of blood, never watched with eager ear the boom of opposing artillery, the crash of musketry, peered through the cloud of smoke to see the colors he loved advancing or receding, thrilled with every emotion of which the soul is capable, save fear, while in uncertain scale hangs the glory of victory or the humili-^{ation}

tion of defeat, to such a one words are tame, and the pencil of the artist or chisel of the sculptor produces only the figures of a pantomime. There is, in fact, an infinitude of reasons why we can only catch here and there a glimpse of the fearful drama, mere miniature pictures that are preserved in the recollections of the actors, the gems of the occasion that even amid the hurling of living men 'gainst belching cannon and glittering steel, burned themselves into their memory, and now that the general outline has faded away leaves them clear-cut and definite. It is these incidents, photographed upon the very brain of the observing actors, that form the staple of conversation among old campaigners. It was while thus recently living an hour in the past, that Lieut.-Colonel —— gave me the following incidents of personal observations, which I have taken the liberty to designate "An Hour at Chickamauga," and which I will give with fidelity to facts, and as nearly as possible in his own words. Said the Colonel :

Some incidents of that struggle cling closely to my memory, and are as clear to my mind as

if they had occurred but yesterday. They were photographed on my brain amid the shock and smoke of battle. One series occurring in quick succession, and in the order I shall give them, impressed me deeply, and by way of contrast are to me both thrilling and pleasing.

Our brigade was for some reason divided, the 35th Indiana being attached to the 99th Ohio, both commanded by the Colonel of the latter regiment, P. T. Swayne. This little brigade was held in reserve, a position in a great battle-field that to the uninitiated might have some allurements as one of comparative ease and safety. But an old campaigner will tell you that it is hard to watch the progress of the struggle without participating, to see the work of carnage and in it learn your doom beforehand, and if you have a morsel of fear in your nature, become palsied by the sight while you wait for orders. Then, where the battle is hottest, when the line is weakening, crumbling away, perhaps fleeing before a victorious enemy, to receive your orders, "Forward — double-quick — march ! Charge

bayonet!" and rushing headlong into the storm of rain and hail—and succeeding or failing there, again fall back to again look on, to count your losses, to note the comrades who have just fallen, and again into the same desperate vortex, charge again and again—that's what it is to be "the reserve."

Well, we were in reserve under Col. Swayne. You will remember him well. He was as genial a friend as ever clasped a hand—as courtly a gentleman as ever smiled at the fair—and as gallant a soldier as ever buckled on a sabre. You will remember how, after that fruitless and disgusting march, in which as raw recruits we were dragged through the Kentucky campaign in '62, by Buel, in a fictitious pursuit after Bragg, and in what an utterly broken-down and dispirited condition he found us in camp near Nashville, Tennessee. It was to his skill, his discipline and his offices as the most accomplished drill-master of the United States service, that the 99th Ohio Volunteers became unrivaled among volunteers and unabashed in relation to everything that pertained to the soldier, even in the presence of

regulars, not at all omitting the actual shock of battle. As an organization we owe him a debt of gratitude, and as an individual now in the path of peaceful pursuits, I cannot refrain from "rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

You will remember that he was rather under size, with a clear complexion, thin mustache, and with a young look that did not tell of the pith that had "set squadrons in the field." He was scrupulously neat in his apparel, and on this occasion wore a bright blue overcoat, the cape of which (lined with red) was thrown back over his shoulders. For some reason on this field he rode a white horse through the entire series of actions, which made him, with his blue overcoat and the displayed red of the cape, a conspicuous object. A voice cannot be described. That of Col. Swayne was singularly sweet and musical, and for purpose of drill and battle, most perfectly under his control. Mid all the clash and din, it rang out clear and distinct, without tremor or confusion, and that clear voice giving, in battle, commands as precise

as on parade, thrilled many a heart on that day, and the little Colonel on his white horse, moving to and fro, is a picture that none who saw it will be likely to forget. But I have said that under his command that day the 99th Ohio and 35th Indiana volunteers were held in reserve.

It so happened that in one of the charges made by the rebel troops near Widow Glen's House, our line was shattered, and on re-forming a gap was left to the right of the brigade commanded by that accomplished gentleman and soldier, General Harker, who afterward fell waving his sword on the enemy's works when leading his troops in a desperate charge at Kenesaw mountain. Harker's brigade was already hard pressed, and nothing could save it from the crushing power of the enemy but to meet, with stubborn hearts and leaden sleet, that part of their line which was in desperate purpose charging to pass through this gap. In closed column and with quick stride they bore a forest of bayonets, sending a storm of balls to herald their coming. Against this avalanche were here led the 99th

and 35th, who closed the gap, and with fierce volleys and naked steel caused them to quiver and reel until their thinned line lost its pressure and its power. The wild shout of the charge ceased, and hurriedly they retraced the path that was strewn with their dead and wounded. In the brief lull of battle that followed this gallant charge and desperate repulse, the lines were reformed and the 99th and 35th were relieved. The enemy in the meantime closed up his shattered columns to again grimly defy powder and ball by charging over the path strewn by their dead and dying.

This lull in the storm was as brief as the combat before, and to follow was indescribably terrible to our overpowered and shattered lines, who fought only with musketry against the veteran columns of Longstreet, aided by artillery that spread lurid smoke around and swept the field with ball and shell. While the reserve for this short interval awaited orders, I looked to the left and saw in the open wood the fearful tragedy of just such a battle as that from which we had emerged. A staff officer came out of this dark cloud

and dashing up to Colonel Swayne gave him some order. In an instant we were moving in column to the left and toward this maelstrom of death. At the same instant rose the terrific yell and crashing volleys that told too plainly that the line we had left must again face the fierce hurricane. The ground over which we marched was swept by an actual storm of leaden hail—solid shot crashed through the trees or ploughed the ground, while hissing shells exploding made hideous every inch of space. The soil was splashed up in our faces and the limbs and twigs showered upon us from above. Looking back, I saw the line we had left crumbling away and breaking, with what final result I do not know.

In this fearful tornado of danger and death as on we charged, I noticed in this wood an object so strongly in contrast that it shocked me. Lost—terrified—appalled—there behind a log lay a little girl of about eight summers, whose sweet frightened face was such a sad reproof to the fierce passion of war. With but a glance I turned away to rush into the fray and never saw her more.

Just beyond this belt of open wood we quickly deployed into line of battle in an open field and saw the line in front come wavering, crumbling, crushed towards us.

Immediately to our right sat on a large bay horse a general officer. He was utterly alone —no aid or orderly being near. The thunder of battle swept along the front—to the right,—to the left,—everywhere lines were wavering and crumbling like ropes of sand. But amid it all he was unmoved. That “good right arm” knew not the tremulousness of fear nor that soul the faltering of doubt. Alone, unmoved surveying the field, calm as a battle statue, sat the hero of Chickamauga! Colonel Swayne rode up to him quickly, saluted with the precision of a parade, and receiving a calm salute in return, in his crisp voice said, “Good morning, General Thomas. How goes the battle?” To which General Thomas, with a sublime hopefulness, replied, “Very well, very well, sir! Move your line forward!” And the elegant little Colonel wheeled his horse, leaving the calm, grand old hero alone to watch him and

his brave command in the grapple with death.

Just at this moment the Colonel of some Ohio regiment rode up to Colonel Swayne. He was soiled with the dust and smoke of battle, and tears, actual tears, rolled down his cheeks—but they were the tears of a brave man. As he rode up he said, hurriedly, “Colonel, for God’s sake, move forward your men, and let me form my command in your rear. They are being slaughtered like sheep. They are running but they are not cowards. They are overpowered.”

Then came the thrilling command, “ Forward—charge bayonet!” and the retreating men passing through our line, we grappled with an enemy flushed with victory. It was, however, but a few moments before a shout in our rear rose above the din of battle, and looking back I saw the men who had retreated, under the lead of their gallant Colonel, come sweeping down with the elegance of a parade, their dread purpose told by their fierce shouts.

It is needless to add that there was grim work there, nor that the enemy sullenly but promptly sought more healthy quarters.

Thus I give this sketch of a series of pictures that are so clearly defined in my mind, pictures that were, in the tornado of battle, stamped on my very brain on that terrible Sunday forenoon. I see General Thomas, brave, bronzed, cool and unmoved, as he sat on his bay charger without any attempt at display or pomp—utterly alone in this very hell of battle—and Colonel Swayne, mounted on his white horse, his blue overcoat cape thrown back, splashing his shoulders with red, as he rides up to him and salutes—equally fearless, equally brave, but jaunty, elegant, polished,—the sweet, cowering face of that child gleams up from behind the log,—I see the Ohio Colonel weeping from sheer sorrow and chagrin, reform his line and dash into action; and all set in the thunder, the smoke, the crash and commotion, the fierce yells, the groans and blood of that terrific fray.

But to conclude, I will add an incident that occurred during the afternoon of the same day. As the waves of battle moved to and fro, it often happened that the same ground was charged over again and again, and thus the

dead and often the wounded would be swept over by both friend and foe, and the ground strewn with the bodies and soaked with the blood of both "the Blue and the Grey." The 99th Ohio was charging over such a field to support a hard pressed line. As they swept along and came near the line of battle, I saw a Federal line officer lying at the root of a tree. The blood was gushing from what appeared to be a shell wound in his side, its loss producing that fearful thirst that makes a battle-field wound so terrible. To the passers he appealed most piteously for a drink of water. I stopped and raised him up as best I could, and told him I could not now go for water, but as soon as this fight was over I would return. This was rather a precarious promise, but I fulfilled it, as the struggle was short. It was really but a few minutes. I found him reclining as I had placed him against a tree. By an effort he had removed from his pocket the photograph of a beautiful woman and two sweet-faced children, which, clasped in his hands, was still held before his face. He was dead.

WAR MEMORIES.

NO. 4.

A PRIVATE'S STORY.

I believe they call it strategy, and this was the way of it.

General Banks was near Culpepper, with an enemy in his front. General McClellan was very anxious to be relieved of a part at least of the rebels that were materially interfering with his comprehensive plans. For these impressive reasons we were marched by General Pope from Front Royal to join the first of those officers, with the view of aiding him to win a victory, or at least to compel the enemy, in order to frustrate this plan, to weaken their lines in front of "Little Mack," and thus enable him to attack with prospect of success.

At least that was the way we privates figured it out. Certainly something deemed important was on hand, for we made forced marches, and from experience you know that they are not very amusing; particularly when, on approaching your destination, you hear the ugly rumble of war, and at last catch glimpses of shells bursting in the air. Such an outlook is so uninviting that it requires qualities of a rare order to inspire a desire to be there in preference to other places you then are apt to call to mind. At least, my ambition to win glory did not increase as I approached the scene, and I confess that I was not chagrined on our arrival near Culpepper in the evening, to observe that the battle of Cedar Mountain had come to at least a temporary suspension. I was rendered quite comfortable by the thought that a little rest would be afforded, with a lease on life for another night; to-morrow would take care of itself.

I did not know it then, but in fact a terrible battle was expected on the following day, this expectation being foiled by the early appearance of a flag of truce, asking for a suspension

of hostilities for the purpose of burying their dead. This apparently humanitarian idea had in it, as much of that commodity often has, a selfish object and a spice of consummate meanness. It took two whole days to place the dead out of sight and gather up the wounded that were scattered over the field, when lo! the enemy had disappeared. They had violated every obligation of honor, every usage of civilized warfare by changing their position during the delay thus obtained, had made the graves of their dead a cover behind which to ignobly retreat!

General Pope being the ranking officer present, assumed command of the whole, and being restive, with "his headquarters in the saddle," we followed in pursuit. It was weary work, for after marching two days along the serpentine highway that winds around the apparently interminable mountains, we could look down on the very battle-field we had left, and see the yellow earth of the graves that spotted its surface.

In due time we reached the Rapidan, and soon found that General Lee had thought best

to weaken his lines in Gen. McClellan's front, and had, by rapid movement, effected a junction with the enemy immediately before us. It was now our turn to "advance to the rear," which we did with commendable eagerness, as the rebels kept up a vindictive skirmishing behind us that always inspires the feet if not the spirits of retreating troops. Without going into camp at all, we at last reached the north fork of the Rappahannock river at Rappahannock station.

We found the river banks quite steep, the stream being so narrow that a musket would readily send a bullet across it. It was sufficient, however, to aid us in making a temporary line of defense, for the treble purpose of securing needed rest and rations, and giving time for the arrival of our expected reinforcements. A new trestle-work bridge spanned the stream, over which, with sullen cheerfulness, we marched, not, however, without observing that its timbers were covered with tar, and that on either side were a row of tarred shavings carefully adjusted in little piles.

The narrow valley of the stream on the rebel

side swept upward into a range of hills, the undulating face of which afforded few objects that would protect advancing troops. Near their end of the bridge were timber and stones scattered promiscuously, being chiefly the wrecks of destroyed bridges and buildings, and a little distance above, the valley wore a covering of tall grass. Where we were halted the more level ground bore a few scattering trees. Along the stream above us a comparatively dense forest afforded a cover for our troops there encamped. In order to delay as much as possible the approaching enemy, a detachment of infantry worked industriously at throwing up a line of works in front of and close to the rebel end of the bridge, over which, when too closely pressed, they could retreat and join us. We were not sufficiently worn out by the long and toilsome march to prevent many of us from taking position among the scattering trees, as an audience to watch the drama that would surely be enacted on the opposite hill and valley. Our expectations were soon realized, for over the crest soon appeared the wary skirmishers.

Dusky brown figures, in slouch hats, each relieved by glitter of a gun, flitted here and there as best they could for shelter, until each possible ambush concealed its inquiring marksman. From every available point arose the little puff of smoke and sped the fierce bullet at the devoted few, who, behind their frail works, defended the bridge. The hillside seemed alive with spiteful demons, when suddenly the furies were let loose from their grim cannon just arrived upon the stage. Federal guns quickly form in battery, and their shot and shell splash into the face of the smiling but infested hillside. Shot hiss and shriek in their converging flight and crash among the mere handful of defiant men. They seem already doomed, when on the crest appear swift moving cavalry in grey, who to the fierce din add the music of their carbines. With eyes intently fixed on the terrific scene, we had not noticed their formation, but as if by magic a cavalry column in blue, with gleaming sabres, ride at quick pace across the bridge, and without halt deploying, gallop with reddened spurs into the faces of the foe. Then came the crash of the avalanche against

the rock, hand to hand, and steel to steel. We see nothing through the hazy smoke but the flash and crash of blades, emptied saddles, and the earth flecked with men that seem too brave to groan. A rebel officer is dismounted, and coolly drawing his revolver, commences firing on a Federal sergeant, who instantly spurs his horse toward him. Like a statue, and as unmoved, stands the soldier in grey, delivering his fire with quick and steady aim. The sabre gleams in sweeping circle, and, slashing through his neck, the head of the ill-fated officer strikes the ground before his mangled body. Under this dramatic cloud of smoke and sabre-stroke, our infantry retreat across the bridge, followed close by the cavalry, who have saved them from death or a fate more dreaded.

Steadily the enemy have pressed on, until the hillside seems a fiery sea, the border of which has reached close to the end of the bridge, supported by heavy masses of troops that now appear on the grounds above them. The picture is glorious, even to the actors in many a bloody contest.

Amid the multitude of spectators, and near the end of the bridge, on his horse, sits Gen. Pope, in anxious complacency, watching the movements in the fray. He knows that the rebel army is divided, and that the other part will probably cross above, in spite of the efforts of General Siegel, and that his own safety now consists in the destruction of the bridge, that his pursuers may be delayed in crossing. This fact is equally plain to all of us, for all are practical men. With the thought comes a shudder, for rebel cannon and musketry can sweep every inch of the narrow structure. The delay of its burning to this moment is evidently the result of a mischance. It must be done now or never, and the General, turning to the men, calmly inquires if "Any one will volunteer to apply the torch." Not a man moves or speaks a word, for every one has noted both the necessity and the appalling danger. It is clearly the narrow way to certain destruction! A repetition of the inquiry, even from the lips of their commander, seems only to rivet the feet and palsy the tongues of men who have never turned on their heel in

the face of battle peril. Every moment increases both the necessity and the danger of the undertaking, when, in response to a third inquiry, a soldier moves as if to step to the front, a comrade, quick as thought, seizes him, saying, imploring, "No, no, my brother, you must not go. It is but certain death!"

The grasp detains but a moment, for, shaking off the unwelcome intruder, he steps quickly near the General, and gracefully saluting, answers, calmly, "General, I will fire the bridge!" Our astonishment appears to be shared by the officer, who evidently shrinks from sending, on so perilous an errand, a man who is brave enough to offer, and after a moment's hesitation asks him if he realizes the difficulties of what he proposes to undertake to do. Prompt, as brave, the soldier answers, "Yes, General, I understand it." There was a touch of tenderness in the voice of the officer as he continued, "My brave boy, you will not probably succeed in crossing the bridge, it is scarcely possible that you can return alive. There are three piles of shavings on either side, the furthest must be fired first, and the

remainder as you come back. There must be no mistake. If you go and return, you shall be rewarded." Again touching his cap, he replies, calmly, "I will neither falter nor make a mistake," and instantly throwing off his blouse, cap and shoes, stands there a thin-faced boy of nineteen, in ragged pants and shirt of blue!

Six torches are being lighted at the blacksmith's forge, for which he waits without the least concern, and as three are placed in each hand, without the tremor of a muscle, without a further word, he starts on a quick run. Our very hearts stand still, as if we see a real spectre. Even the rebels, who are within one hundred yards of the bridge, in utter amazement, cease firing. His hair floats in the wind that fans the torches into a streaming blaze, as with increasing speed he passes the center and places the first torch in the further pile of shavings. The flashing blaze awakens the enemy from their dream of admiration, and instantly the bridge is swept by a storm of balls. Now, as if flying, he dashes a torch into the next pile on his return, and crosses at an angle to the third. The fierce musketry in-

creases; the smoke of powder and burning tar is swept before him by the wind, and the red flames glare as if the furies follow at his heels.

With well-guided but flying feet he treads the path that seethes and boils with deadly peril. His form glimmers dimly through the cloud, as pile after pile is lighted, and each time as he stoops our hearts stand still again lest he shall rise no more. It seems that only malignant hate can fill the hearts of those who seek the life of an unarmed, beardless, dauntless boy. Our muskets give expression to our feelings, while unspoken prayers go thick and fast to heaven. God protect him now, he is applying the last torch, and the dark cloud is swept around him, illumined by the forked tongues of flame. Shot and shell and minnie bullets hiss like the fierce waters of a mountain torrent, and to us he seems, through the smoke, grown to giant size. His hands are empty now, and he flies from those who hate to those who love him, as they have never loved man before. Moments are precious as life and seem unending. Merciful heaven! how

our blood is frozen by the cry, "Look! Look!" and we see him stagger for a step or two and fall! There on the earth he lies, motionless! No other thought occurs save that he, the pride of our hearts, is dead. Cheeks turn pale as we feel that he is lost, and that the crown of glory so richly deserved, so bravely won, he shall never wear. But even in this extremity, he seems sacred to his comrades, who rush into the torrent to save what remains. Strong arms, nerved with devotion, carry his limp form into an adjacent building. His clothes are found to be riddled by balls, and here and there a dark stain shows how death has touched him, but without mortal harm. Never before has the grim destroyer spared a mark so shining, for he is not really dead. His stout young heart, yielding to the fearful strain, failed only when the task was done, and, fainting, he had, with empty hands, fallen to the ground. The word quickly reached the men and shouts of thankfulness pierced the skies above us.

True merit levels all distinctions, equals the peasant to the prince, the private to his com-

mander, and with that gallantry that attaches to bravery, the General threw himself from his saddle to take his soldier by the hand and thank him again and again. The next day the hero-hearted boy wore on his shoulders the decorations he had earned by seeking “glory or the grave.”

